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HILLARY'S END
— Kathleen Parker

OBAMA v. McCAIN: Michael Knox Beran

NATIONAL REVIEW

THE ORGANIZER

Barack Obama in Chicago

BYRON YORK

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NATIONAL REVIEW

JUNE 30, 2008 VOL. LX, NO. 12

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■ COVER STORY

The Organizer

Barack Obama often cites his time as a community organizer in Chicago as one of the experiences that qualify him to hold the nation's highest office. What *is* community organizing? And what about it is central to Obama's world view? I went to Chicago to find out. *By Byron York*

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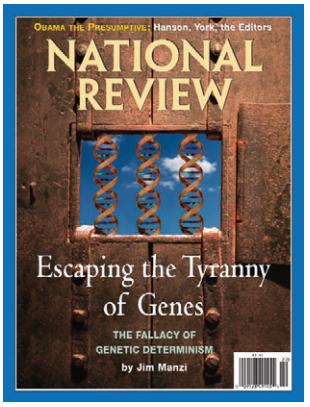
letters to the editor

THE SCIENCE OF LIMITED GOVERNMENT

In "Undetermined" (June 2), Jim Manzi does a terrific job of explaining many breakthroughs in biological science. He's right to urge skepticism when researchers say they've found "the gene" for this or that, and he's right that we should hesitate to use such findings in formulating public policy. But the threat of science-based legislation is less severe than he makes it out to be.


Obama the Presumptive: Hanson, York, the Editors
NATIONAL REVIEW
Escaping the Tyranny of Genes
THE FALLACY OF GENETIC DETERMINISM
by Jim Manzi

He calls out the Right specifically: "The fallacy of what might be called 'geneticism' is particularly tempting to conservatives, because it appears to provide scientific support for the idea of an innate human nature." However, Manzi suggests not one actual policy that these conservatives might wrong-headedly propose. He's quick to raise the specter of eugenics and forced sterilization, but it's highly unlikely that anyone who matters—on the left or the right—will endorse such a thing in the foreseeable future.

The policy arguments some conservatives *are* advancing aren't all that sinister. These conservatives are using science to undermine the assumptions of the Left, not to encourage state-sponsored Darwinism. For example, research has revealed differences between men's and women's brains, raising the possibility that the lack of women in math and science might stem from biology—which would mean that government can't fix it, and should stay out.

Or take the most controversial notion of all, that racial gaps in intelligence might have roots in DNA. Some on the Right have posited that if this turned out to be true, it would undermine affirmative action, a policy based on the belief that, without discrimination, all races would succeed in all fields equally.

One might find this reasoning distasteful, and in the case of race and IQ the science is muddled (as Manzi notes), but it's hardly Hitler's return.

George Berrun
Dayton, Ohio

JIM MANZI REPLIES: Mr. Berrun says the American government is unlikely to institute forced sterilization in the foreseeable future. I agree. I pointed to the Social Darwinist episode as a historical lesson in how mistaken inferences from biology can combine with government power to produce a tragedy.

Contrary to popular belief, forced sterilization was predominantly a progressive program. If conservatives accede to the growing acceptance of an incorrect view of the scientific predictability of human behavior today, it's not at all certain that they will control the policies that emerge as a result. It is impossible to know what specific policies might be established, but I speculate that they would likely relax the notion of personal responsibility: replacing justice with therapy, introducing greater paternalism, and so on.

NATIONAL REVIEW encourages letters to the editor. Letters can be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com. Please include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters will be edited for space and clarity.

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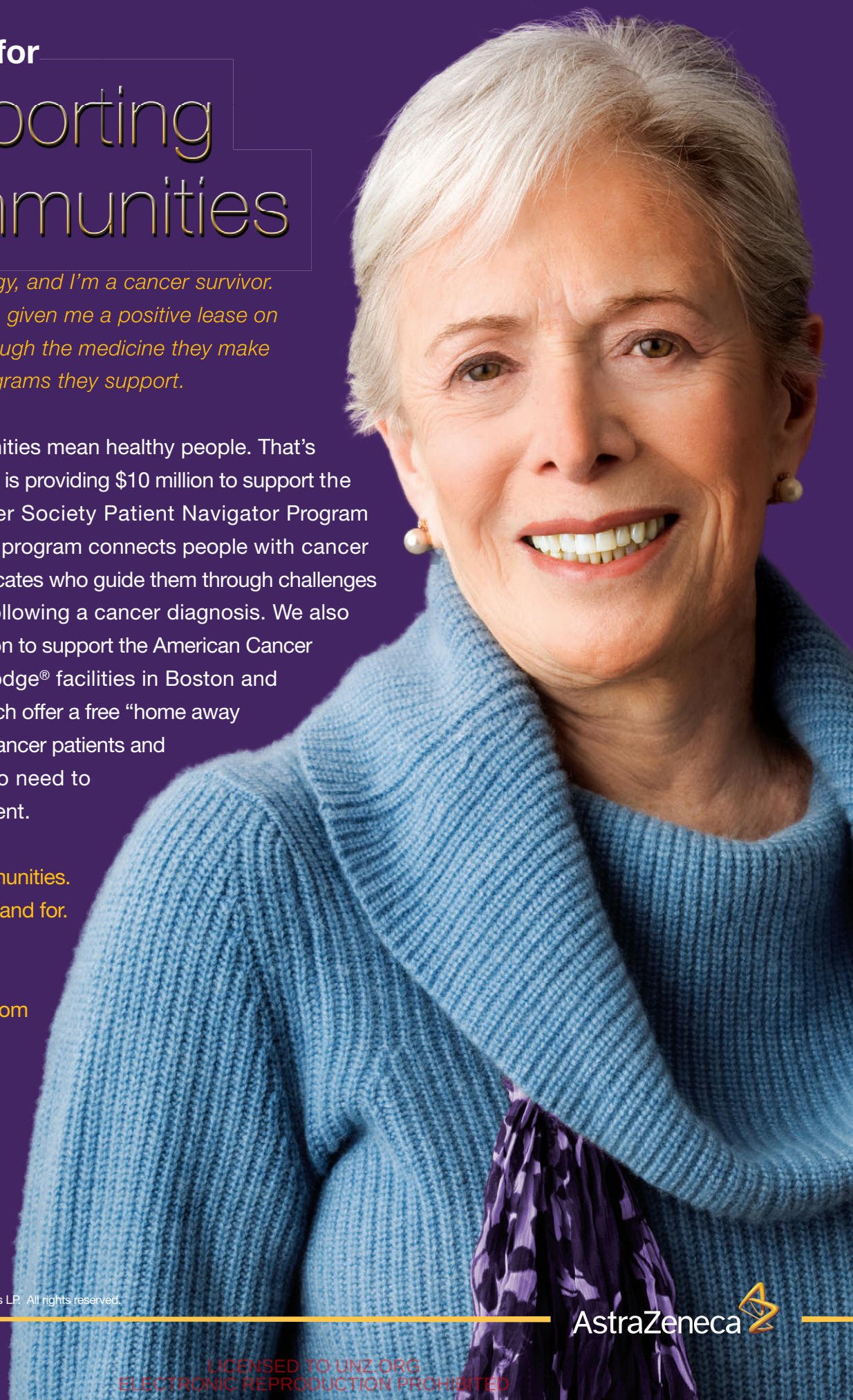

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THE WEEK

■ This is a great country. Even a black man with no discernible accomplishments can become president.

■ Looks like you can disown your family. When the nation first took note of Barack Obama's crackpot racist church, he made a great fuss about how it was woven into his life, the good and the not-so-good together, just like kin. But after the Rev. Michael Pfleger, a rancid white Catholic priest, took the pulpit to mock Hillary Clinton, Obama had had enough and left the congregation. Obama's life story, especially his search for fathers, mentors, and an identity, is compelling. He has written about it rather well, and a great writer could find in it the materials for art. The question that will dog him, from now to November, and perhaps beyond, is, do we want to entrust the presidency to an earnest, ambitious, still-unformed man who, on the eve of his 47th birthday, knows where he wants to go, but not yet who he is, and where he has been? The presidency is not an internship, and it should not be a novel.

■ John McCain has outlined some of the tough measures he would take against Iran: negotiating global sanctions against Iranian banks, freezing the assets of regime leaders and imposing a visa ban on them, launching a worldwide divestment campaign, and restricting Iran's supply of gasoline (for all Iran's oil, 25 percent of its refined gasoline is imported). McCain understands that effective diplomacy is tough diplomacy—unlike Barack Obama, who said for most of the last year that he favors unconditional negotiations with Iran's rulers but is now submerging his position in a sea of murk. What could Obama the Diplomat say to make the mullahs stop enriching uranium, if he does not make clear that they will be punished for defiance? McCain is also unequivocal about the status of Jerusalem: "Jerusalem is undivided. Jerusalem is the capital [of Israel]." Obama said something similar, only to have his aides explain later that he meant *part* of the city could be Israel's capital, and while Jerusalem might be divided, he hoped no barbed wire would be necessary. To be sure, campaign rhetoric does not always translate into action, but at least McCain has told us what his plans are. On Iran and Jerusalem, as in so many other areas, Obama's apparent plan is to get elected and then figure something out.

■ Scott McClellan met George W. Bush in Texas, followed him to Washington, then became one of the worst press secretaries in the history of the presidency. Garbage in, garbage out: Now he has written a tell-all book, repeating, in tones of outraged surprise, every hostile cliché about the administration he served so incompetently. Right now he is being feted by the likes of Keith Olbermann, but six months from now McClellan will be remembered only as another instance of Bush's weakness for subpar cronies—Harriet Miers, Michael Brown. It is far too late for Bush to learn the lesson that you shouldn't trust someone simply because you have known him forever, but perhaps McClellan can serve as a warning for aspiring leaders.

Enjoy it while it lasts, Scott

■ So *Vanity Fair*, the Debrett's of celebrity, pop history, and über-babedom, has turned on Bill Clinton. "The Comeback Id," by Todd S. Purdum, elicited howls of pain from its victim, and on some points the prestige journalist reported sloppily. The anti-Clinton Furies of the Right, meanwhile, can claim to have been ripped off: They were taking bites out of Clinton's hide for years. This, surely, is the news of the piece: not what was said, but where it was said—in a media venue of the kind that covered for Clinton for 16 years. Bill Clinton was an ideal figure for reporters of his generation. He was brainy and glib, like them; ruthless, unlike them, though they admired it; weak and childish, which they decided to deny. They saw the flaws, though (how could they not? they were scarlet). And now that he and his wife have lost, there is a great backlog of accounts pending. Hillary Clinton at least has scars earned in combat, and her Senate seat. Bill has long, grim golden years ahead of him. Couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

ROMAN GENN

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Oil and natural gas make possible our unequaled quality of life. Ensuring such for future Americans will require policies that permit responsible, respectful access to America's plentiful domestic oil and natural gas resources. These valuable resources are within our reach. Let's work together to realize their potential.

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The Week...

■ A triple whammy of bad economic news came out on the first Friday of June. The unemployment rate for May was released, and it had jumped 0.5 percent over April. The price of oil, meanwhile, jumped $10 a barrel in one day. And the stock market dropped. But the statistics on growth, consumption, and even job loss do not suggest that we are in a recession. We have never had a recession when monetary policy has been as loose, and taxes as low, as they are now. Many indicators, on the other hand, point to inflation, especially the weak dollar. The stock market may have fallen not because of the other two pieces of news but because they might keep the Fed from tightening money. The Federal Reserve, like our policymakers generally, is targeting the wrong problem.

■ McCain has gotten panned for his speech in New Orleans. Giving a speech the night Obama clinched the nomination was unwise, highlighting as it did the contrast between Obama's smooth delivery and rapturous fans and McCain's lack of same. But the theme of the speech—that McCain intends to bring conservative reforms to the dysfunctional institutions in American life—is a promising one. McCain will not be a credible reformer, however, unless he takes on the tax code. His current hodgepodge of policies does not amount to tax reform. McCain has said he will unveil a reform plan later in the campaign. It is not beyond the wit of man to design a reform that promotes growth, helps families, simplifies the tax code, and wins votes. We hope it is not beyond McCain's.

■ It will be years before we see the last of those "Bush Lied, People Died" bumper stickers. The slogan has become an article of faith on the Left, and in recent years Democrats on the

DREAMWORKS

They *Think* They Get It . . .

My five-year-old daughter is now a Kung Fu Master. Or at least so she thinks. We saw *Kung Fu Panda* the other day, and immediately afterwards, with the speed it takes to pluck a pebble from the palm of a master, she was showing me all of her Kung Fu "moves." She started explaining to me how there are different "styles" of Kung Fu, and then did her best to show them to me: Monkey, Mantis, Tiger, and so on.

You haven't truly experienced cuteness if you haven't seen a little girl give you that half-bend-of-your-hand gesture where you beckon your opponent for an all-out battle.

That gesture—basically "come here" with four fingers instead of one—is now something of a cliché. You can find it in *The Matrix* as well as countless other rip-offs and cartoons. I assume it comes from Bruce Lee, but for all I know he stole it from someone else.

Before I go on, there are really two ironies at work here. Irony, as I understand the word, is the conveying of one meaning while using the language or form of another meaning. Cuteness, at least in children and puppies, is really a form of irony when you think about it. My daughter, deadly serious in her fighting-mantis pose, is adorable precisely because there is nothing deadly serious about it.

But there's a second irony at work, one that isn't so cute. To the extent she thinks about these things, now or in the future, my daughter will always think at some level that the "language" of Kung Fu movies begins with *Kung Fu Panda*. Similarly, her introduction to the literary world of comic-book superheroes came from a movie called *The Incredibles*—which is basically one giant homage to a genre with which she has no familiarity.

A similar dynamic is generally at work with "young people"—i.e., kids around college age. I can't tell you how many people think I'm referencing *The Simpsons* when I'm actually referencing something *The Simpsons* lampooned. For example, in a recent column I made reference to the *Twilight Zone* episode "To Serve Man." Several readers thought I was referring to the *Simpsons* send-up of that episode. Often, when I've used the phrase "now who's being naive?" college kids assumed I was alluding to *The Simpsons* rather than to *The Godfather*, because *The Simpsons* had parodied it.

I have friends who can quote *Seinfeld* from memory, but they have no idea that *Seinfeld*'s gags are often allusions to something else. Huge numbers of college kids get their "news" from *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, but only tiny fractions of these voters (!) actually watch the news that these shows are mocking.

Start listening for it, and you'll discover that we're raising a whole generation of people who think they get the joke, but don't actually get what the joke was about. Mockery has always been part of our popular culture. But, increasingly, consumers of the popular culture don't even realize that all they know is the mockery.

That's adorable with one five-year-old. But a whole generation? That's not so cute.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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Are Democrats Less Patriotic Than Republicans?

OVER THE COURSE of a generation, the far right in America has peddled a story that says conservatives love their country more than liberals. That's patently false. But it's worth asking: What *is* true patriotism?

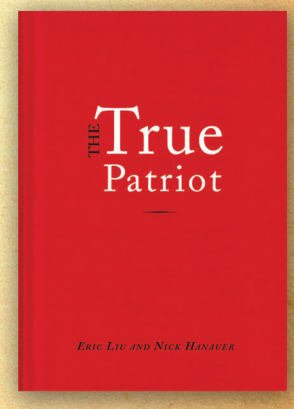
IS IT PATRIOTIC—or even conservative—to support an aggressive expansion of government power to eavesdrop?

IS IT PATRIOTIC—or even conservative—to support tax and fiscal policies that let the wealthiest off the hook, put more burdens on the middle class, and create a massive debt and deficit for the next generation to clean up?

IS IT PATRIOTIC—or even conservative—to throw America's great military into wars and nation-building adventures that have flimsy justification and no definable end?

IS IT PATRIOTIC—or even conservative—to despoil, for short-term profit, America's natural resources and rob our children of their rightful bounty?

We're Democrats, and we've written a little book about the moral code of patriotism. We believe that true patriotism belongs to neither party—but that there are false patriots in both. We believe that true patriotism means progress, pragmatism, and country above self. And we think there are conservatives who would agree. What do *you* believe?



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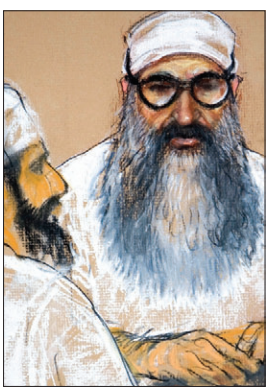
The Week...

Senate Intelligence Committee have conducted investigation after investigation in an effort to prove it. Now we have their final report, covering statements made by administration officials in the run-up to the war in Iraq. Committee chairman Jay Rockefeller claims it shows the administration "repeatedly presented intelligence as fact when in reality it was unsubstantiated, contradicted or even nonexistent." But wait. Even a cursory look at the report shows that in a number of areas, including the critical subject of Iraq's weapons-of-mass-destruction capabilities, the administration's statements were, in the report's words, "substantiated by intelligence information." So after all that effort, Democrats came up with nothing. Not that they didn't try. Among other things, the majority cut committee Republicans out of the investigation and refused to include the many statements made by Democrats who also believed Saddam Hussein had WMD. "It is ironic that the Democrats would knowingly distort and misrepresent the committee's findings and the intelligence," committee vice-chairman Kit Bond said, "in an effort to prove that the administration distorted and mischaracterized the intelligence."

■ Thanks to Gov. David Paterson, New York has become the third state to recognize same-sex marriages. The high court of Massachusetts imposed the policy on the state in 2003. This year, California's supreme court followed suit. The California ruling allows out-of-state same-sex couples to get marriage licenses. Now Paterson has directed his state's government to recognize those "marriages." Whatever else this is, it isn't democracy.

■ The city of Minneapolis made an odd move recently, restricting vehicle-idling time to three minutes in the name of the environment. It is unclear what portion of the city's pollution comes from more-than-three-minute idling to begin with, so the law may restrict freedom to no worthwhile end. And, just as annoying, the council chose to act on the cusp of summer—it is far from constituents' minds that, when the frigid winter comes, they will want to warm up their cars before heading out.



BRENNAN LINSLEY/AP

■ Khalid Sheik Mohammed and four other top al-Qaeda operatives were arraigned at Guantánamo Bay on charges of orchestrating the 9/11 attacks. Their military-commission trial is still months away, at best. For now, defense lawyers will zealously attack the commission procedures as inadequate, though the effort may be undermined by their "clients": jihadists who reject the process, view their assigned counsel as tools of the Great Satan, and insist that they will represent themselves. More problematic could be a Supreme Court ruling, expected any day, on whether combatants have constitutional rights. If the justices say yes, that will, at minimum, prompt new legal challenges to the commissions' validity. Also hovering over the proceedings is the fall election, which pits McCain, who seems lukewarm to commissions and wants to close Guantánamo Bay, against Obama, an enthusiast of the 1990s approach of trying terrorists in the civilian justice system with all the privileges appertaining therein. As president, neither would be bound to continue the Bush prosecution strategy. Meantime, KSM, who concedes (indeed, brags about) his role in 9/11 and sundry other atrocities, took the occasion of his arraignment to bray that he wants the death penalty because he seeks martyrdom. At last: something on which we and al-Qaeda can agree.

■ Reports in *The New Yorker* and *The New Republic* detailed a growing ideological fissure within al-Qaeda. Dr. Fadl is an Egyptian who was once close to al-Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri. His work has been the intellectual justification for al-Qaeda's terror, which makes it an astonishing and important development that—in a new book written from an Egyptian jail—he opposes most terrorism as illegal under Islamic law. He is not alone, as former allies of al-Qaeda turn against it, repulsed by its campaign of slaughter against fellow Muslims in Iraq and elsewhere. CIA director Michael Hayden says al-Qaeda is losing the battle for hearts and minds in the Muslim world. The indispensable precondition for this loss is that it is clearly suffering a defeat in Iraq, which is beginning to look like al-Qaeda's Vietnam: a losing war that is a severe blow to its prestige and ideological credibility. *Inshallah*.

■ Speaking of hearts and minds, take heart from the recent example of Mosul, Iraq. The Iraqis and their helpers there chased away al-Qaeda. So bread returned to the bakeries—the local bread, called "sammoun." Why had it disappeared? Al-Qaeda had disallowed it because this type of bread did not exist at the time of the Prophet. Also, cucumbers and tomatoes could once again be displayed side by side. Why had this been disallowed? Sexually provocative. When we defeat al-Qaeda, we defeat insanity, and allow life to proceed again.

■ Al-Qaeda has attracted feminists' ire: because the terror group says that jihad is for men, not women. Many Islamist women, via the Internet, are pleading for the right to be suicide bombers. And, of course, many of them are. Hamas is more moderate than al-Qaeda, because Hamas is happy to have women commit terror. Is "moderate" the word? These questions are dizzying. The Associated Press reported all this in creepily earnest fashion. You would have thought they were talking about equal-pay laws.

■ The *Wall Street Journal* is keeping an eye on the U.N. The General Assembly elected Miguel d'Escoto its president. And it made the government of Burma one of its vice presidents. Remember d'Escoto? Think back to Sandinista days: He was their foreign minister. In 1985, he won the Lenin Prize, and it was richly deserved. As for the Burmese government, it has been busy denying its stricken citizens humanitarian aid—because the aid comes from foreigners, such as Americans. It may be that the U.S. could not have blocked these actions. Still,

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In the new issue of *Policy Review*

Islam, the Law, and the Sovereignty of God

Accomodating Koranic principles to the civil religion

Where Muslims cannot expect to enforce Shari'a they will, hopefully, work to accommodate Islam to the civil religion we find, for example, in the United States. In this civil religion, moral precepts from many denominations are found, but they are abstracted from the denominational precepts that may be in force for believers, precepts that are not enforced politically. The resources for such an accommodation can be found in Islam, in its concern for equality and social justice. If this accommodation occurs in the United States, perhaps it will have an effect on the larger *umma*, spurring an understanding of Islam that will enable its development so as to facilitate the construction of viable constitutional states in Muslim majority countries.

—Mark Gould

A Better Approach to Foreign Aid

Private development finance is vital

Rather than providing aid according to the wishes of foreign governments, the United States should provide incentives to encourage corporations and individuals to distribute development dollars. In 2006, $380 billion of foreign direct investment flowed to developing countries and $220 billion in remittances was sent home by developing-country migrants. . . . Government policy can act to shape the direction of these dynamic flows of private development capital rather than solely relying on the old model of government-to-government transfers. One simple way to provide incentives for private development finance is to give tax credits to American companies that invest in developing countries.

—Justin Muzinich & Eric Werker

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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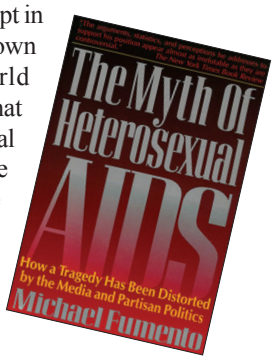
The Week...

we wonder: Is the U.S. being as vigilant as it was when John Bolton was our U.N. ambassador?

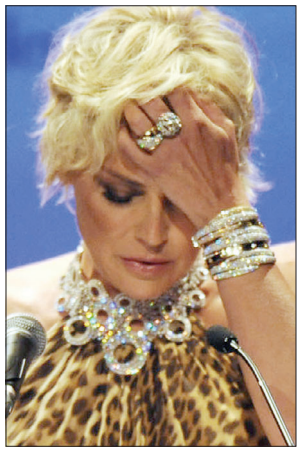
■ The U.N. and its agencies offer regular showcases for Third World monsters. This time, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization held a conference in Rome, its headquarters, to discuss the current crisis in supplies of food and oil. FAO rules allow countries to choose their own representatives, and so Robert Mugabe and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad were free to fly in and hijack the proceedings. Both men are racists and murderers, a danger to the people they are supposed to be representing. At the conference they blamed hunger on the West, rather than their own crimes and mismanagement. These two are not so much anti-Western as anti-human. Their presence brings further disgrace on the U.N. at a time when the feat seemed impossible.

■ After years in decline, the Maoist "Shining Path" movement has made a startling comeback in Peru. The 1992 capture of its leader, an ex-philosophy professor named Abimael Guzmán, led to a steep decline in the group, which numbered up to 10,000 at its peak and murdered tens of thousands in its pursuit of a Communist utopia. Recently, the group abandoned its decision to shun the drug trade. Its resumption turned out to be quite profitable. Since then, the proceeds from providing protection for drug dealers have gone toward arms and recruitment. Shining Path has renewed its attacks on police stations and other outposts of order in Peru's jungles. For U.S. policymakers, the situation bears close watching; for others, let it serve as a painful reminder that utopian thinking paves the path to hell.

■ AIDS has undoubtedly been the most politicized disease in history. A key feature of its politicization was the claim that without massive funding for prevention programs, the disease would escape into the general population from its bases among homosexual men and needle-using drug addicts. Heterosexuals were all under threat, we were told, along with their spouses and children. No one was safe! Yet as the years have passed, no heterosexual outbreak occurred except in sub-Saharan Africa, which has its own peculiar problems. Now the World Health Organization is conceding that there is unlikely to be a heterosexual epidemic outside of Africa in the future, either. Apologies should be sent to Michael Fumento, whose book *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS* exposed the scam, to the outrage of AIDS activists, in 1990.



■ Sometimes, abortions go wrong, and the baby survives. (What a sickening sentence.) That is what happened in England recently. Jodie Percival became pregnant with her third child, and, along with her fiancé, decided to have an abortion. Her first child had died of kidney disease, and her second child is now afflicted with such disease. "I was on the pill when I became pregnant," Ms. Percival said. "Deciding to terminate at eight weeks was just utterly horrible, but I couldn't cope with the anguish of losing another baby." So she had the abortion—or thought she had. She felt a fluttering in her stomach, and went to have a scan. "I couldn't believe it," she said. "This was the baby I thought I'd terminated. [Such a clinical word.] At first I was angry that this was happening to us, that the procedure had failed. I wrote to the hospital, I couldn't believe that they had let me down like this. They wrote back and apologized and said it was very rare." In the end, baby Finley was born, and he is expected to lead a normal life. Yes, sometimes abortions go "wrong."



■ When was the last time you heard the word "karma" used in earnest, as in: "Bad karma, man"? For most of us the answer would be around 1967, when hippies roamed the land. Most of us don't hang out with Hollywood airheads, though. In those precincts the argot of the hippie era is still current, as 18th-century English is said to be on remote Pacific islands. Hence actress Sharon Stone's remark to a Hong Kong interviewer at the Cannes Film Festival, linking the recent terrible earthquake in China to China's treatment of Tibet. "Is that karma," wondered Sharon aloud, "when you are not nice that the bad things happen to you?" Predictably enough, Ms. Stone is now *persona non grata* in the People's Republic. Her apologies have fallen on willfully deaf ears, she has been de-invited from the Shanghai Film Festival, her movies are banned, and she has lost lucrative advertising work. Ms. Stone's remark was crass from several angles, and certainly heartless towards the thousands who perished in the earthquake. Still, it would be easier to sympathize with the indignation of the Chinese if they showed some iota of remorse for the invasion, looting, and destruction of Tibet.

■ The "panties for peace" campaign inspires mixed feelings. The notion here is that the unpleasant military dictatorship of Burma can be brought down if enough women around the world mail a pair of panties to their local Burmese embassy. According to one of the campaign's websites, some Burmese men harbor a "superstitious fear that contact with a woman's underpants will rob them of their power." Rendered impotent by the mass mailing of knickers, Burma's leaders will slink away, leaving the nation open to democracy. It all seems a bit far-fetched to us, and the list of feminist organizations behind the idea is off-putting. Still, nothing else much has shifted the horrible Burmese junta, so perhaps it's worth a try. Can they get a few movie actresses on board? This might be a way for Sharon Stone to redeem herself with her Asian fan base. No, wait a minute . . .

■ If you think it's tough to get a plumber on the weekend, try getting one when you are 200 miles up in the air and traveling

STONE: FRED DUFOUR/AFP

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The Week...

at 17,000 miles per hour. That was the quandary faced by the International Space Station when its on-board Russian-built toilet broke down. Two weeks of bathroom blues ensued, relieved only when Russian plumber Oleg Kononenko was brought up by space shuttle. Within two hours Mr. Kononenko was able to tell ground controllers the problem was fixed. A shuttle launch costs upwards of $450 million, so the toilet-repair bill here was well within union scale.

■ Mark Steyn is being persecuted by the Canadian thought police. (See p. 28.) Even worse, he is taking a hiatus from writing "Happy Warrior." In his absence, various writers will be filling in. This issue, it is Kathleen Parker, the widely syndicated columnist who is author of the new book *Save the Males*. Enjoy.

■ Wasn't Brigitte Bardot unforgettable, archetypal, Eve herself on the loose in France? Think of her in *And God Created Woman*. Once she decided to make no more movies, her transformation into angry matriarch was a bit of a shock. First she took up animal rights, and then she began to protest about Muslim immigration. You have to be very careful what you say on that topic in France, and Bardot has been convicted several times for inciting racial hatred. She is, it seems, a fan of the far-right Front National, which until its recent change used to be openly anti-Muslim. In December 2006, her two causes came together. Bardot wrote a letter to Nicolas Sarkozy, at the time Interior Minister, to complain that the method of slaughtering sheep at the Muslim festival of Aid el-Kebir is cruel. France, she stated—and repeated on her website—was "tired of being led by the nose by this population that is destroying our country by imposing its acts." A body called Movement Against Racism filed a suit, and she has to pay a fine of over $23,000 for again inciting racial hatred. Free speech has surely never had a defender quite like this before.

■ The most entertaining showbiz spat of the past few weeks has concerned Clint Eastwood's recent movie *Flags of Our Fathers*. The movie tells the stories of the six men seen raising the Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima in World War II's best-known photograph. None of the men was black (though one was Native American), and black Americans played no significant part in the flag-raising or immediately subsequent events. Eastwood therefore has no black characters in his movie. This has irked Spike Lee, who obliquely accused Eastwood of racism. Eastwood defended the historical accuracy of *Flags*, noted that his 1988 movie biography of black musician Charlie Parker had a mostly black cast, and told Lee to "shut his face." Lee countered with a slavery card: "We're not on a plantation." All good knockabout fun, and it would be too much to hope for any meeting of minds between Eastwood (libertarian individualist, ex-U.S. Army) and Lee (race-grievance socialist, ex-film school). The historical record supports Eastwood. There were several hundred black servicemen on Iwo Jima, often under fire. They were in support roles, though, kept from front-line combat by the social and military ethos of the time. Unfair, but not Eastwood's fault.

■ A predictable feature of any election season is the left-wing celebrity who vows to quit the U.S.A. if a Republican should become president. Pop singer Eddie Vedder and actor Alec Baldwin took the pledge prior to the 2000 election. Radio host Robin Quivers followed suit in 2004. All were still resident here last time we checked, though Vedder seems to have moved to Hawaii, which is at least a gesture in the right direction. Well, first at bat in this year's election cycle has been actress Susan Sarandon, who has vowed to go into exile with her husband, Tim Robbins, should John McCain be the victor in November. What a pity that they're lying, too.

■ What is it about former vice presidents that makes them so irresistible to opera composers? First there was *Nixon in China*, by the vice-presidentially-named John Adams, and now La Scala has commissioned Giorgio Battistelli to build an opera around Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. Operas have certainly been based on less promising material (though none spring to mind at the moment), but music buffs need not worry: There will also be scenes from Gore's biography to perk things up. An appropriately wooden tenor should not be hard to find. Speaking of buff, the New York City Opera has commissioned Charles Wuorinen to compose a work based on "Brokeback Mountain," the Annie Proulx story about homosexual Wyoming cowboys that spawned a highly acclaimed film. At last, a way to get gay men interested in opera!

■ A few years back, the promoters of "Bodies . . . The Exhibition" had a problem. The traveling science-museum show, in which preserved corpses stripped of their skin are used to display the human body's internal organs, needed a supply of cadavers in good condition from healthy people (who just happened to be dead). By a fortunate coincidence, the Chinese Bureau of Police had a generous supply of that very item that it was looking to unload, and so a deal was struck. The exhibit has traveled the country since 2005, increasingly hounded by questions about the origins of its bodies. Now, in a settlement with New York state, the promoters have admitted that they are not sure whether their cadavers were among the thousands of prisoners that China executes every year (whose remains, when not preserved whole, are often harvested for organ transplants by the thrifty Chinese government). Anyone who saw the exhibit in New York and objects to the Chinese connection can get a refund; future visitors will be told of the bodies' uncertain

FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS: DREAMWORKS SARANDON AND ROBBINS: SPLASH NEWS AND PICTURES

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origins. And perhaps museums will learn to be just as careful about the provenance of their human exhibits as they are with works of art.

■ The *New York Times*'s critics often find plenty of ammo in the paper's corrections; when they're lucky, they even get corrections of corrections. Rarely, however, does a correction reveal the paper's bias and gullibility so well as this June 1 one does: "An article on May 4 about black liberation theology and the debate surrounding the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr., Senator Barack Obama's former minister, erroneously confirmed a statement by Mr. Wright that the United States has used biological weapons against other countries. There is no evidence that the United States ever did so." It's hard to decide which is funnier—the fact that the statement "Mr. Wright notes, correctly, that the United States has tried biological warfare on foreign nations" ran in the Newspaper of Record, or the fact that it took the editors almost a month to sort it out.

■ Encounter Books has now been publishing intelligent center-right books for ten years. The Hudson Institute's Bradley Center for Philanthropy and Civic Renewal held a symposium to celebrate the anniversary. Victor Davis Hanson contributed a paper on the consequences of the politically correct erasure of our cultural memory, John Fonte outlined the threat that transnational progressives pose to the democratic nation-state, and Andrew McCarthy asked why we persist in misunderstanding the jihadists even as they take pains to explain themselves clearly. The names are familiar from these pages, as are the lucidity and realism associated with them. That all three men have written books for Encounter is a tribute to the enterprise. Their common theme at the symposium, the defense of things worth defending against external attack and internal decay, is a fine working definition of conservatism.

■ The Scripps National Spelling Bee came to its annual conclusion, 13-year-old Sameer Mishra of Lafayette, Ind., walking off with the top prize. Five of the twelve finalists were of South Asian stock, raising yet again the borderline-taboo question of why people of *this* ancestry are good at *this*, while people of *that* ancestry are good at *that*. In the case of South Asians, names may have something to do with it. If you've grown up around people named Sripathi Panditharadhyal Balasubramanyam and Mokshagundam Vishweshwaraiah, spelling "hyphaeresis" must be a breeze. But then, why do East Asians also do well? Kyle Mou and Justin Song made the top twelve.

■ The country recently marked the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy. Something was missing from all the talk about it, though: the key facts about the assassin. He was a Palestinian Arab who hated RFK for his support of Israel. Suppose that Kennedy had been killed by a right-wing racist who hated him for his support of civil rights. Wouldn't that fact be burned into every mind?

■ Yves Saint Laurent had the greatest impact in his day on how clothes were cut, shaped, and sold. His tombstone might be inscribed, "He put women into pant suits." Alternatively, "He invented beatnik chic." Born in Algeria in 1936, he came to Paris at the age of 17, and was instantly recognized. Nervous, an addictive personality, he was nonetheless a good businessman, and his YSL logo became an international success. Whether or not they know it, lots of people are walking tributes to his imagination and dress sense. R.I.P.

2008

Obama in Plain View

THE Democrats have gone all the way. They have nominated arguably the most left-wing major-party presidential nominee ever, certainly the most left-wing since George McGovern.

Obama's victory is a repudiation not just of the Clintons personally, but of Clintonism. Bill Clinton won the presidency based on a new kind of Democratic politics that pivoted toward the center. Obama has had no Sister Souljah moment; indeed, he initially embraced his Sister Souljah (in the form of Rev. Jeremiah Wright, introduced to the American public in videotaped rants). He has made no creative policy departure on par with Bill Clinton's advocacy of welfare reform in 1992—in fact, has made no creative policy departure at all. He is the old wine of McGovernite liberalism poured into the alluring wineskin of "hope" and "unity."

Democrats have done Republicans the favor of nominating one of the few Democrats this side of Dennis Kucinich who could lose this year. But he still has to be slightly favored over John McCain. Political conditions are grim for Republicans. Their two-term incumbent president is scorned, many of their policies are unpopular, and people have been departing their party in droves, if polling of party ID is to be believed. On top of this, there are Obama's formidable personal talents. Not just an inspirational speaker, he ran a campaign in the primaries that was well-organized and strategically deft. He is not to be underestimated.

If he wins with the kind of larger Democratic majorities he is likely to see in the House and Senate, he will be in the strongest position of any Democratic president since LBJ in 1964. It will not be a replay of the Clinton presidency: Clinton styled himself a moderate and after 1994 spent the rest of his presidency triangulating off a Republican congressional majority. And the current Democratic Congress is more uniformly liberal than the Democratic Congress of 1993–94. Obama will be in a position to deal conservatism some of its worst setbacks in 40 years.

Standing in the way of this fate is John McCain. He has to try to blunt Obama's nebulous message of change as much as possible, by pointing out that McCain himself is the one who has actually taken political risks for bipartisanship, whereas Obama's agenda is an antique liberalism. McCain must demonstrate that Obama's record and biography are at odds with his current political persona as the national Pied Piper of unity.

McCain also has to raise doubts about Obama's national-security credentials—but must avoid the temptation to run

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Black Listed Cancer Treatment Could Save Your Life

Baltimore, MD— As unbelievable as it seems the key to stopping many cancers has been around for over 30 years. Yet it has been banned. Blocked. And kept out of your medicine cabinet by the very agency designed to protect your health—the FDA.

In 1966, the senior oncologist at a prominent New York hospital rocked the medical world when he developed a serum that **"shrank cancer tumors in 45 minutes!"** 90 minutes later they were gone... Headlines hit every major paper around the world. Scientists and researchers applauded. Time and again this life saving treatment worked miracles, but the FDA ignored the research and hope he brought and shut him down.

You read that right. He was not only shut down—but also forced out of the country where others benefited from his discovery. That was 39 years ago. How many other treatments have they been allowed to hide? Just as in the case of Dr. Burton's miracle serum these too go unmentioned.

Two-Nutrient Cancer Breakthrough...

Decades ago, European research scientist Dr. Johanna Budwig, a six-time Nobel Award nominee, discovered a totally natural formula that not only protects against the development of cancer, but people all over the world who have been diagnosed with incurable cancer and sent home to die have actually benefited from her research—and now lead normal lives.

After 30 years of study, Dr. Budwig discovered that the blood of seriously ill cancer patients was deficient in certain substances and nutrients. Yet, healthy blood always contained these ingredients. It was the lack of these nutrients that allowed cancer cells to grow wild and out of control.

By simply eating a combination of two natural and delicious foods (found on page 134) not only can cancer be prevented—but in case after case it was actually healed! "Symptoms of cancer, liver dysfunction, and diabetes were completely alleviated." Remarkably, what Dr. Budwig discovered was a totally natural way for eradicating cancer.

However, when she went to publish these results so that everyone could benefit—**she was blocked by manufacturers with heavy financial stakes!** For over 10 years now her methods have proved effective—yet she is denied publication—blocked by the giants who don't want you to read her words.

What's more, the world is full of expert minds like Dr. Budwig who have pursued cancer remedies and come up with remarkable natural formulas and diets that work for hundreds and thousands of patients. *How to Fight Cancer & Win* author William Fischer has studied these methods and revealed their secrets for you—so that you or someone you love may be spared the horrors of conventional cancer treatments.

As early as 1947, Virginia Livingston, M.D., isolated a cancer-causing microbe. She noted that every cancer sample analyzed (whether human or other animal) contained it.

Six-time Nobel Nominee's Two-Nutrient Cancer Breakthrough Revealed

This microbe—a bacteria that is actually in each of us from birth to death—multiplies and promotes cancer when the immune system is weakened by disease, stress, or poor nutrition. Worst of all, the microbes secrete a special hormone protector that short-circuits our body's immune system—allowing the microbes to grow undetected for years. No wonder so many patients are riddled with cancer by the time it is detected. But there is hope even for them...

Turn to page 82 of *How to Fight Cancer & Win* for the delicious diet that can help stop the formation of cancer cells and shrink tumors.

They walked away from traditional cancer treatments...and were healed! Throughout the pages of *How to Fight Cancer & Win* you'll meet real people who were diagnosed with cancer—suffered through harsh conventional treatments—turned their backs on so called modern medicine—only to be miraculously healed by natural means! Here is just a sampling of what others have to say about the book.

"I bought *How to Fight Cancer & Win* and this has to be the greatest book I've ever read. I have had astounding results from the easy to understand knowledge found in this book. My whole life has improved drastically and I have done so much for many others. The information goes far beyond the health thinking of today." *—Hugh M.*

"I can't find adequate words to describe my appreciation of your work in providing *How to Fight Cancer & Win*. You had to do an enormous amount of research to bring this vast and most important knowledge to your readers.

My doctor found two tumors on my prostate with a high P.S.A. He scheduled a time to surgically remove the prostate, but I canceled the appointment. Instead I went on the diet discussed in the book combined with another supplement. Over the months my P.S.A. has lowered until the last reading was one point two." *—Duncan M.*

"In my 55 years as a Country Family Physician, I have never read a more 'down to earth,' practical resume of cancer prevention and treatments, than in this book. It needs to be studied worldwide for the prevention of cancer by all researchers who are looking for a cure." *—Edward S., M.D.*

"As a cancer patient who has been battling lymphatic cancer on and off for almost three years now, I was very pleased to stumble across *How to Fight Cancer & Win*. The book was inspiring, well-written and packed with useful information for any cancer patient looking to maximize his or her chances for recovery." *—Romany S.*

"I've been incorporating Dr. Budwig's natural remedy into my diet and have told others about it. Your book is very informative and has information I've never heard about before (and I've read many books on the cancer and nutrition link). Thanks for the wonderful information." *—Molly G.*

Don't waste another minute. Claim your book today and you will be one of the lucky few who no longer have to wait for cures that get pushed "underground" by big business and money hungry giants.

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exclusively on the Iraq War and the War on Terror. He needs, above all, to show that he has a compelling domestic reform agenda, which he has been slowly developing.

All while facing a strong political headwind. Obama will probably shoot up in the polls now that he has secured the nomination. Democrats will unify and the coverage will initially be dominated by the historic nature of his accomplishment as the first African-American nominee of a major party. We can all honor what his nomination says about the openness and dynamism of American society.

But by nominating Obama, the Democrats are betting that Clinton's triangulation and Bush's perceived failure have changed the country so much that an uncompromising liberalism is once again politically viable. If McCain presents a competent and reformist conservative alternative, he can prove the Democrats wrong.

2008 II

Exit Clinton

After 15 years of mutual enmity, conservatives have from time to time been saying nice things about Sen. Hillary Clinton. Partly this was because many of us were enjoying the spectacle (and favoring the consequences) of a protracted and bitter fight between two liberal Democrats. Partly it was because we thought she would be a steadier hand as president than Sen. Barack Obama would be, with more hawkish instincts and greater political realism. Partly it was because the liberal intelligentsia had turned on the Clintons with such hysteria once they no longer advanced its interests.

Clintonism as a political style was mostly noxious. But it made its bows to the Right on trade, on taxes, on foreign policy, even on social issues.

It was poetic justice for the Clintons. They had spent years subordinating truth, decency, and the nation itself to their own interests—most spectacularly during the impeachment scandal of 1998, a yearlong drama that it was entirely in the Clintons' power to spare us. In 2008, liberals professed shock that the Clintons might be willing to subordinate the interests of the Democratic party to their own as well. It was poetic justice for them, as well.

In a remarkable political year, one of the most surprising developments has been the revelation that the Clintons never changed nor mastered their party's screwy primary rules. We will not pretend to regret the resultant temporary exit of the Clintons from presidential politics, which indeed we hope will become permanent. Clintonism as a political style was mostly noxious. (Since we are in a real war, neither campaign will have a self-described "war room" this time.) But it made its bows to the Right on trade, on taxes, on foreign policy, even on social issues.

Obama pats us on the head—he understands our position, he says—and presses forward with an undiluted liberal agenda. The only thing worse than Clintonism may be what replaces it.

PUBLIC POLICY

The Energy Shortage

The U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission announced that it has opened an investigation into whether futures traders conspired to drive up oil prices. We doubt the investigation is necessary; when one considers breakneck economic development in India and China, the weak U.S. dollar, and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), one hardly needs the services of the CFTC to solve the mystery of the oil-price spike.

But there is a group of people conspiring to make energy more expensive for Americans. That group is the U.S. Congress. By refusing to open domestic lands and coastal waters for energy exploration, Congress is keeping billions of barrels of oil off the market. OPEC would be proud, and must be pleased.

Critics of proposals to open these areas for business argue that it would take up to ten years to bring any new supplies online. Of course, they were using this same argument ten years ago, and if they hadn't prevailed then the U.S. would be less dependent on foreign oil today.

They also argue that Congress should be encouraging renewable energy sources such as solar power, wind power, and biofuels rather than opening the spigots on new sources of petroleum. But the simple fact of the matter is that solar power and wind cannot take the place of nonrenewables in the U.S. economy. As for biofuels such as corn ethanol, the 2007 mandate requiring the production of 36 billion gallons by 2022 has exacerbated an increase in world food prices without doing anything to lessen the pain at the pump.

Superior U.S. technology has made it possible to drill in the environmentally sensitive areas off our coasts with minimal disturbance to the surrounding ecosystem. It is better to increase production in the U.S. than to allow high prices to spur increased production in countries with worse environmental track records. With oil nearing $140 a barrel, there are no good arguments for keeping this supply off the market.

Nor are there any good arguments for artificially making energy more expensive, though congressional Democrats (and a few Republicans) recently attempted to do just that. First, the Senate tried to pass a cap-and-trade bill. By rationing the use of fossil fuels, the bill would have led to higher coal, natural-gas, and petroleum prices, even though the prices of those commodities are already at historic highs. Fortunately, an adequate number of GOP senators banded together to kill the bill. Even some Senate Democrats reportedly began to wonder about the political wisdom of pushing through higher energy prices.

Undaunted, Senate Democrats proposed a windfall-profits tax on U.S. oil companies. The Congressional Research Service found that the last time Congress imposed one, it reduced domestic production.

Republican senators stymied the windfall-profits tax, also, but with several Senate seats in danger and a presidential nominee who supports energy rationing, whether the GOP can continue to fight effectively for a cheap-energy agenda remains an open question. The CFTC is investigating oil-price fixing, but where is the agency that will protect Americans from Congress?

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■ 2008 ■

Getting Our Phil

Smearing Phil Gramm

RAMESH PONNURU

PHIL GRAMM can't say he wasn't warned. The former Texas senator, now the co-chairman of John McCain's presidential campaign, was a principal subject of a front-page *Washington Post* story on April 2. "Democratic opponents are already plotting attacks" on Gramm, reported Jonathan Weisman.

In the following two months, hit pieces on Gramm have appeared in *The Nation*, *Salon*, *Mother Jones*, *The Huffington Post*, and many other left-wing publications. For opposing regulation when he was a senator, Gramm is being blamed for contributing to Enron's fraud, the high price of gas, and the mortgage meltdown. Keith Olbermann, the MSNBC ranter, even links him to 9/11. He has taken to referring to "John McCain's Phil Gramm scandal."

The attack on Gramm serves three goals for the Left. It discredits Gramm, McCain, and deregulation all at once. Gramm has been one of the most effective conservative legislators of his generation. He led the fight for Ronald Reagan's first, and most conservative, budget, and led the fight against the Clintons' health-care plan a decade later. Forcing McCain to dump Gramm would be payback for decades of conservative victories. Merely sullying his name might keep a President McCain from nominating him to be secretary of the Treasury.

But a full review of the facts exonerates Gramm.

The Enron exemption. The litany of charges against Gramm begins with his wife, Wendy. Like him, she is an economist. In the first Bush administration, she ran the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. According to the liberal storyline, while there she pushed through a measure to deregulate certain types of energy trades, left office, and joined the audit board of Enron. In 2000, Senator Gramm surreptitiously codified this exemption into law. Enron was as a result free to commit fraud, enriching the Gramms.

Gramm's critics uniformly omit the rest of the story. The trades in question had never been regulated. In 1990, a court decision left it unclear whether they fell under the CFTC's regulatory authority. The House voted 395-27 to instruct the CFTC to exempt these trades. The accompanying Senate bill was sponsored by liberal Vermont Democrat Patrick Leahy. After the bill passed, Rep. John Dingell—a Democrat and no free-market zealot—urged Wendy Gramm to put the exemption into effect quickly. The commission started working on the issue. But the exemption actually went through after Wendy Gramm had been replaced by a Democrat.

In 2000, Congress took up a bill on futures regulation that reaffirmed the exemption. Committees of the House and the Senate held hearings on the legislation. The Clinton administration came out in support of the bill. Gramm put a hold on the legislation because of other issues, even as the head of Enron, Gramm's friend Ken Lay, was writing congressmen urging swift action. Once Gramm's issues were resolved, the bill passed Congress by overwhelming margins. By that time, its Senate co-sponsors included not only Gramm but Iowa's populist Democrat Tom Harkin. But even if Congress had not passed the bill, the CFTC would have reaffirmed the exemption itself. It was planning to do so until the bill's passage made it unnecessary.

To summarize: The law recognized the "Enron exemption" before the Gramms acted; they reaffirmed existing law rather than removing existing regulations; and the exemption would have stayed in the law even if the Gramms had never been born.

The bank wars. The second charge concerns a deregulatory measure for which Gramm really does have primary responsibility. Since the Great Depression, the federal government had enforced a separation between commercial and investment banking. By the 1990s, most observers thought that the rule no longer made sense given the way financial markets had evolved. Gramm led the effort to get rid of it. Congress overwhelmingly passed, and President Clinton signed, a bill bearing his name that did so. It is also true that after Gramm left the Senate, he took a job at UBS, a firm that took advantage of the rules change.

Now Gramm is being blamed for the trouble in the financial markets. A blogger at *The Huffington Post* wrote that Gramm had torn down "a financial structure that served us well . . . and left a war zone." Senator Obama has embraced the theory that banking deregulation contributed to the current mess, although he has refrained from hyperbole.

In truth, Gramm's legislation probably made the current trouble less severe. As *The Economist* recently concluded, "the more focused institutions, on both the investment-banking and retail-banking wings of the industry, were the ones that got into most trouble." It cited a Boston Consulting

PHIL GRAMM WITH JOHN MCCAIN; CHARLES DHARAPAK/AP

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Group analysis that found that "the more diversified players performed better in this crisis than the less diversified ones." Gramm frequently points out that without his legislation, it would have been illegal for J. P. Morgan to rescue Bear Stearns.

Robert Litan, a Clinton administration official, goes so far as to say that the housing sector would be doing better if Gramm had gotten more of his way. Gramm thought the Community Reinvestment Act put too much pressure on banks to lend to people with bad credit. Which is not to say Gramm had perfect foresight: Nobody pushed for the regulation of mortgage brokers that most observers now favor.

Gramm's 9/11 non-connection. According to Olbermann, Gramm "blocked legislation that would have helped the U.S. investigators track Osama bin Laden's financial network before 9/11." Perhaps surprisingly given the source, the claim is true. Less surprisingly, it's not the whole story.

The Clinton administration wanted to let the Treasury secretary end companies' access to U.S. financial markets on determining that they were not cooperating with investigations. Gramm took a civil-libertarian line on the issue. He says that he proposed two compromises: one that would have let judges review the secretary's decision before the fact, one that would have let them review it afterward. The administration turned down both compromises. After September 11, similar bills with civil-liberties protections passed Congress, with Gramm's support.

Default options. The newest charge against Gramm is that the same 2000 legislation on the regulation of futures included a provision that deregulated "credit default option swaps." David Corn issued an indictment in *Mother Jones*, headlined "Foreclosure Phil":

> Who's to blame for the biggest financial catastrophe of our time? There are plenty of culprits, but one candidate for lead perp is former Sen. Phil Gramm. Eight years ago, as part of a decades-long anti-regulatory crusade, Gramm pulled a sly legislative maneuver that greased the way to the multi-billion-dollar subprime meltdown. . . .
>
> Credit default swaps are essentially insurance policies covering the losses on securities in the event of a default. Financial institutions buy them to protect themselves if an investment they hold goes south. . . .
>
> Because of the swap-related provisions of Gramm's bill—which were supported by Fed chairman Alan Greenspan and Treasury secretary Larry Summers—a $62 trillion market (nearly four times the size of the entire U.S. stock market) remained utterly unregulated, meaning no one made sure the banks and hedge funds had the assets to cover the losses they guaranteed.

"Utterly unregulated" is an overstatement, but it is not necessary to get into the details to see the problem with Corn's account. To believe that Gramm was pulling a "sly legislative maneuver," you would have to think that Greenspan and Summers—Clinton's Treasury secretary, that is—were in on the conspiracy. In which case Gramm's claim to be "lead perp" looks pretty thin.

As right-of-center blogger Tom Maguire has pointed out, the credit-default provision of the law actually emerged from a Clinton administration working group.

So far, the mainstream media have not followed the Left's lead on Gramm. Their coverage has instead focused on two other issues. Reporters have raised the possibility that Gramm might sustain political damage because of investigations involving UBS, the large company where he is a vice chairman. And they have reported that within the last year he has lobbied Congress to stop a bill that would let bankruptcy judges rewrite mortgages. But if the investigations continue to stay far away from Gramm personally, they should not damage his reputation. The housing bill may not be much of a problem for Gramm, either. Even though the Democrats control the Senate, enough of them sided with the Republicans that a majority voted to defeat the bill.

Don't be surprised, however, if some of the mud being thrown at Gramm makes its way from left-wing blogs to the mainstream press. The charges against Gramm are convoluted, and new ones keep being added. Few people will take the time to go through them. So even if the charges have no merit, they could put Gramm under a cloud.

In 2002, when Enron's meltdown was in the headlines, several newspapers ran stories saying that Gramm had muscled an exemption for the company through Congress. Those stories were largely based on a paper put out by Public Citizen, a left-wing group founded by Ralph Nader. Many of those newspapers ended up having to run corrections. But some lies won't die. **NR**

■ **2008 II**

Lakoff the Baptist

How a liberal strategist predicted Obama's rise

JONAH GOLDBERG

For all the renewed talk of a "conservative crack-up" these days, there are still some things conservatives can largely agree on. The big examples are pretty obvious: Markets are more efficient than government, collectivism is bad, Reagan was put on this earth to kick ass and chew gum (and he ran out of gum a long time ago). But there are even relatively trivial areas where the consensus is no less concrete. Some that come to mind: *The Road to Serfdom* was Friedrich Hayek's most famous, but not best, book; John McCain isn't the ideal standard-bearer for conservatism; Whittaker Chambers was probably too hard on Ayn Rand; the Swift Boat Vets for Truth were right to do what they did.

Even farther down the list, somewhere near "conservative magazines have too many subscription cards," would be this: George Lakoff is among progressivism's most overrated dashboard saints.

Now, some may say this claim is belied by the grand chorus of readers who, having traversed the preceding sentence, exclaimed: Who is George Lakoff? No doubt most of us have forgotten who George Lakoff is, but things could have gone another way. During the Middle Bush Years, Lakoff was something of a prophet to Democrats and the left-wing blogosphere. In the 2006 article "Free to Twist Left in the Wind," National Review's Anthony Dick observed that "if the American Left believed in sainthood, they would have resolved to beatify George Lakoff by now." A linguist at Berkeley, Lakoff offered exactly the argument liberals wanted to hear: We're right about everything, and we've always been right about everything. It was a variation of Al Franken's Stuart Smalley schtick:

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You're good enough, you're smart enough, and doggone it people like you. Or more precisely, they *would* like you, if you just did a better job of explaining why you're such a winner.

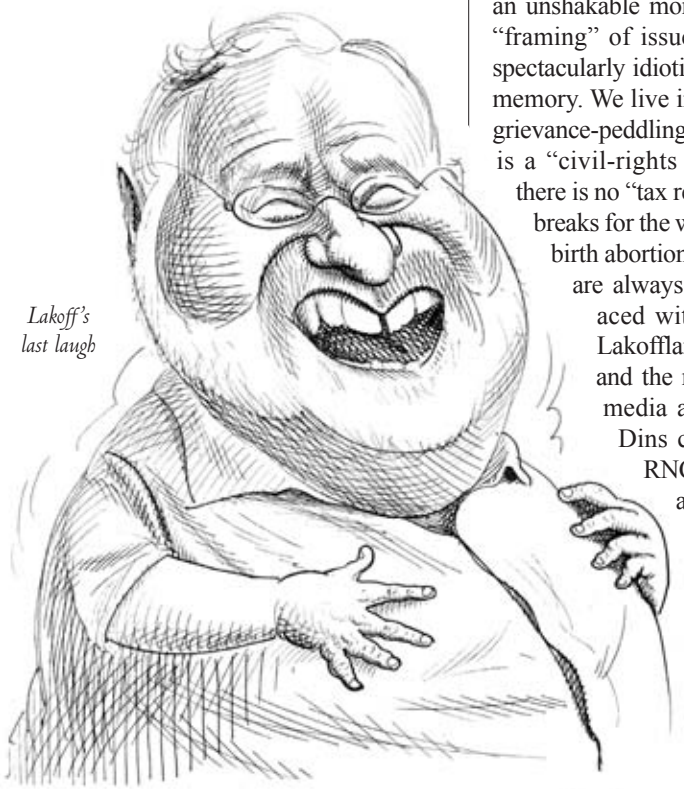
Enter Lakoff's self-help books for the ideologically blameless. First there was *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*. Howard Dean wrote a foreword for it. It was handed out like free samples of intellectual Viagra in the old-age home that is the Democratic party, particularly on Capitol Hill. Dean, whom Barack Obama has retained as head of the DNC, dubbed Lakoff "one of the most influential political thinkers of the progressive movement." Robert Reich hailed the book as "essential reading in this neo-Orwellian age of Bush-speak."

Now is the point where the unwritten rules of punditry state that I should expand on Lakoff's ideas and explore them in more depth. But I have already exhausted the elasticity of the man's ideas, and any more expansion might result in a loud pop. As for depth, well, there is a certain depth, in the sense that one can keep digging into a pile of manure looking for the fabled pony, even though there sometimes isn't one.

Still, rules are rules. So let's get into this idea of "progressives are right about everything and if Democrats merely used the right rhetoric everyone would agree." Don't call them "trial lawyers," call them "public protection attorneys." It's not "environmental protection," it's "poison-free communities." According to Lakoff's script, "Taxation is paying your dues, paying your membership fee in America." (Never mind that people complain about high membership fees too, or that membership fees are for voluntary organizations.)

The reason Democrats fail to use the right words is that they—in their infinite decency and honesty—still cling to the "myths" of the Enlightenment. Chief among these myths: "If we just tell people the facts, since people are basically rational beings, they'll all reach the right conclusions."

What Democrats need to do instead, says Lakoff, is "frame" the issues in ways the mouth-breathing voters can grasp. It is difficult to single out all the problems with this "framing" of reality. But aside from its contempt for democracy, the American public, reason, the Enlightenment, etc., his argument is also just incredibly silly when extended beyond the obvious clichés of good salesmanship and Frank Luntzian boilerplate. The idea that the Right has had an unshakable monopoly on the media's "framing" of issues is one of the more spectacularly idiotic contentions in recent memory. We live in a world where every grievance-peddling identity-politics group is a "civil-rights organization," where there is no "tax relief" but there are "tax breaks for the wealthy," where partial-birth abortion and the War on Terror are always and everywhere prefaced with "so-called." But in Lakoffland, the *New York Times* and the rest of the mainstream media are ideological Gunga Dins carrying water for the RNC, the Club for Growth, and the pro-lifers.



Lakoff's last laugh

ROMAN GENN

In *Whose Freedom? The Battle over America's Most Important Idea*, Lakoff in effect argues that progressives are, without exception, on the side of "freedom"—as opposed to those demonic, soul-sucking incubi of the Right. "Freedom and liberty are progressive ideas that are precious to Americans. When the right wing uses them, it sounds as if aliens had inhabited, and were trying to take possession of, the soul of America. It is time for an exorcism."

The freedom he has in mind is a dog-eared Deweyism in which every expansion of, and intervention by, the federal government is justified on the grounds of liberty. *Whose Freedom?* makes not a single reference to Dewey, or any of Dewey's relevant contemporaries, but there is nothing in this manifesto that wasn't clichéd long before Lakoff was born. As Dewey put it, "the state has the responsibility for creating institutions under which individuals can effectively realize the potentialities that are theirs," all the while keeping in mind that "natural rights and natural liberties exist only in the kingdom of mythological social zoology."

To this stale substance, Lakoff affixes an admirably fresh bouquet of inanity. Lakoff defines freedom as living a "purposeful life" made possible by the state and under its direction, grounded in the rhetoric of "unity." He says liberals should reject the conservative frame of "activist judges" and call them "freedom judges" instead. You aren't "free" to become an artist, he insists, unless there is a publicly funded art school out there with a "place for you."

But maybe conservatives are wrong to be dismissive. For behold: Before us, in a beam of heavenly light, stands Barack Obama. If Obama is our savior, is not George Lakoff his John the Baptist? Lakoff's gospel predicted that if the Democrats changed their packaging, but kept the same merchandise, liberal products would fly off the shelves.

Obama violates over two decades of political conventional wisdom. Bill Clinton, for all his faults, both understood and seemed to prove that the Democratic party needed to jettison "brain-dead politics" if it was ever going to make a comeback. He pivoted to the center on the signature issues of the day, welfare and crime. Obama has made no similar pivots. As the editors of National Review recently put it, "He has made no creative policy departure at all. He is the old wine of McGovernite liberalism poured into the alluring wineskin of 'hope' and 'unity.'"

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The signing of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

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No wonder Lakoff has greeted Obama as his kind of progressive. He hailed Obama's disingenuous speech on Jeremiah Wright as comparable to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, a "general call to a new politics and an outline for what it needs to be."

Unsurprisingly, what most impresses him is Obama's rejection of Clintonian triangulation. Bill and Hillary's concept of bipartisanship, Lakoff writes on *The Huffington Post*, involves conceding that conservatives have some good ideas. "Obama means the opposite by 'bipartisanship,'" he continues. "To Obama, it is a recognition that central progressive moral principles are fundamental American principles. For him, bipartisanship means finding people who call themselves 'conservatives' or 'independents,' but who share those central American values with progressives. Obama thus doesn't have to surrender or dilute his principles for the sake of 'bipartisanship.'"

Translation: Obama mesmerizes self-described conservatives and independents with his charisma and rhetoric, convincing them to abandon their principles and sign on to Great Society II. That Lakoff (and Obama) thinks bipartisanship entails conservatives' shedding of all their principles is no shocker, given the linguist's oft-expressed conviction that conservatives are constitutionally reprehensible people. When the *New York Times* asked Lakoff why he thought there weren't many conservatives in academia, he explained: "Unlike conservatives, [liberals] believe in working for the public good and social justice, as well as knowledge and art for their own sake, which are what the humanities and social sciences are about."

In arguing that the Democrats could embrace unreconstructed liberalism and still win, maybe Lakoff was right. Or maybe he was just lucky—he made his case at precisely the moment voters were poised to lurch leftward no matter what the Democrats did, and, just then, a deft politician came along and followed his advice.

But Lakoff's Achilles' heel remains the same as ever: A renaissance in the appeal of liberal rhetoric will not make liberal policies any more effective or successful. That's another thing conservatives can agree on. **NR**

■ 2008 III

True Believer

Obama was for black-liberation theology before he was against it

STANLEY KURTZ

By this point, nobody can seriously suggest that Barack Obama was unaware of the hate-filled rhetoric emanating from the pulpit at Trinity United Church of Christ until it was, very recently, pointed out to him. The church's long history of radical-leftist and anti-white sermons by Jeremiah Wright, Michael Pfleger, and others has been made so unmistakably clear that even the mainstream media eventually had to notice, forcing the candidate to offer his half-hearted resignation from the church. With that act, Obama hoped to close the book on his Trinity connection, putting an end to the questions about what he knew and when, and why he waited so long to leave the church.

A more interesting question, though, is why Obama joined Trinity in the first place. Some of his defenders suggest he did so to advance his career as a community organizer: The residents he needed to reach and the contacts he needed to make went to Trinity, so he went there too. In this view, Obama was merely being practical, not radical.

Don't believe it. This was no matter of convenience or expediency. Obama's connections to the radical-left politics espoused by Pfleger and Wright are broad and deep, and he largely approved of their political-theological outlook. Obama shared Wright's rejection of black "assimilation," individual self-improvement, and the pursuit of "middle-classness." His goal was not to repudiate religious radicalism but to channel its fervor into an effective and permanent activist organization. How do we know all this? We know it because Obama himself has told us.

A key source for deciphering his political views is a 1995 background piece on Obama that appeared in the *Chicago Reader*, a left-leaning "alternative" weekly. Hank De Zutter's "What Makes Obama Run?" gives us an in-depth picture of Obama's worldview on the eve of his career in electoral politics. In it, Obama presents his political hopes for the black community as a third way between two inadequate alternatives.

First he rejects, in De Zutter's words, "the unrealistic politics of integrationist assimilation—which helps a few upwardly mobile blacks to 'move up, get rich, and move out.'" Obama, we are told, "quickly learned that integration was a one-way street, with blacks expected to assimilate into a white world that never gave ground." He also criticizes "the politics of black rage and black nationalism"—although less on substance than on tactics. De Zutter says Obama is "tired of seeing the moral fervor of black folks whipped up—at the speaker's rostrum and from the pulpit—and then allowed to dissipate because there's no agenda, no concrete program for change." The problem is not the fiery rhetoric, but merely the wasted anger.

De Zutter lays out Obama's ties to such radical groups as Chicago ACORN, whose lead organizer at the time, Madeline Talbott, practiced the sort of intimidating and often illegal "direct action" that ACORN remains famous for. Talbott is quoted affirming that "Barack has proven himself among our members . . . we accept and respect him as a kindred spirit, a fellow organizer." The article also mentions Obama's early organizing work for the Developing Communities Project, which was "funded by south-side Catholic churches." Clearly, this early work cemented Obama's close ties to Father Pfleger, whose support formed a critical component of Obama's grassroots network. Because of this early link, Pfleger threw his considerable support behind Obama's failed 2000 bid for Congress.

In an article on National Review Online, I explored the possibility that Obama may also have used his seats on the boards of a couple of liberal Chicago foundations to direct funds to groups that served as his de facto political base. The threads of this political network are pulled tighter as Obama turns to a

Mr. Kurtz is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Rockets Over Sderot

What should Israel do to stop this outrage?

Three years ago, Israel abandoned the Gaza strip and evicted the over 8,000 Jewish residents who had lived there for generations and who had created an island of civility, industry and prosperity. What has been Israel's reward for its generosity?

What are the facts?

Israel's many mistakes. In its six decades of history, clouded by almost uninterrupted warfare against it, Israel has made many mistakes. Relinquishing the Sinai to Egypt, Southern Lebanon to Hezbollah, and Gaza to the Palestinians were the most egregious. One lesson to be learned was that one cannot make peace with one's enemies by giving away pieces of one's country.

The greatest folly, of course, was the abandonment of Gaza. Virtually since the first day of Israel's disengagement from the area, the Gazans have launched daily rocket attacks on the city of Sderot. So far "only" about twenty Israelis have been killed. Many more have been wounded.

> "...the bitter experience with Gaza will make Israel quite unresponsive to our government's desire to achieve a 'two-state final solution'..."

But it is only a matter of time that one of these rockets is going to hit a school, a hospital or an apartment building, causing unacceptable casualties. Then Israel's forbearance and patience are likely to snap.

These Qassam rockets, however, are only the beginning. Large quantities of explosives and more advanced weapons systems – presents from Syria and mostly from Iran – are supplied daily through sophisticated tunnels from the Sinai into the Gaza territory. That happens under the "watchful eyes" of the Egyptians, who have foolishly been allowed to be the guardians of the border between Egypt and Gaza.

There is no question what any other country would do if it found itself in a position similar to that of Israel. What would we do if bombs or rockets launched from Mexico landed in San Diego? Obviously, we would obliterate the source of such attack and inflict sufficient additional damage to totally discourage such behavior in the future. But what does Israel do? Does it use its powerful army or its superb air force to destroy the areas from which these rockets are launched? Surprisingly not. Guided by its own moral compass and always concerned about "world opinion," Israel attempts to pinpoint the source of attacks, taking enormous care not to hurt "innocent civilians." But the concept of "innocent civilians" is nonsense, of course. Anybody who allows his backyard to be used as a launching pad for rockets should expect his home to become a target for counterattack and for casualties to ensue.

Lessons to be learned. For reasons that are not at all clear, Israel finds itself in the thankless role of being responsible for Gaza's welfare, adequate supply of food, fuel and electricity. Occasionally, in feeble retaliation, Israel will slow the supply of fuel and electricity, though it never curtails the supply of food and medicine and routinely allows seriously ill Gazans access to its superb medical facilities. When it occasionally does curtail fuel and electricity, the world complains about Israel's "siege of Gaza."

Some questions: 1) Who appointed Israel to be the guardian of Gaza and responsible for its welfare and comfort? 2) Why don't the Gazans and their Iranian and Syrian friends use the sophisticated tunnels leading from Sinai to Gaza to import fuel, food, and medicine instead of explosives and weapons? 3) Why, in sixty years and in the decades before, when Egypt was in charge of Gaza, have the Palestinians been unable to build a functioning power plant that would make them independent in that respect? Surely their Arab cousins, could supply some of their abundant petroleum for that purpose.

Israel's attempt to stop the shelling of Sderot has so far been a failure. But what *should* Israel do? The answer is obvious: Israel should openly declare to Gaza and to the world at large that every rocket that falls on Sderot or on any place in Israel will immediately be responded to by a rocket aimed at where it came from. Since Gaza is packed with humanity, it is clear that such a tit-for-tat approach would cause many civilian casualties. That would be a tragedy, of course. But, it is pretty clear that the rockets would stop in short order. Sure, "the world" would object. But a country's first duty is to protect its citizens from attack. That is what *we* would do. That is the very least any country would do.

The real tragedy is that the bitter experience with Gaza will make Israel quite unresponsive to our government's desire to achieve a "two-state final solution" before the end of the year. No such solution is possible in this or in any other year unless Israelis are convinced that the Palestinians wish to live in peace and friendship with them. If, under the pressure of our government and of many other countries, Israel would commit the folly of giving up control of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), not only the Palestinians, but also Syrians and Iranians – with heavy armament, planes and tanks – would pour in and would dominate the Judean ridges and the heartland of Israel. That would finally achieve the long-hoped-for end of the Jewish state. It would bring about what many wars and "intifidas" were unable to accomplish.

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"favorite topic": "the lack of collective action among black churches." In this year's presidential campaign, Obama has rationalized his ties to Trinity Church by citing its community-service programs. Yet in 1995 he was highly critical of churches that focused exclusively on food pantries and other services while neglecting the sort of politically visionary sermons, local king-making, and political alliance-building favored by Pfleger and Wright.

Obama rejected the strictly community-service approach of apolitical churches as part of America's unfortunate "bias" toward "individual action." He derogated this as "John Wayne" thinking and the old "right wing . . . individualistic bootstrap myth," which needs to be replaced: "We have some wonderful preachers in town—preachers who continue to inspire me—preachers who are magnificent at articulating a vision of the world as it should be. . . . But as soon as church lets out, the energy dissipates. We must find ways to channel all this energy into community building." If anything, Obama wanted to give the political visions of Wright and Pfleger greater weight and substance, by connecting them to secular-leftist political networks like ACORN.

Another part of Obama's strategy was to stay outside traditional political channels. As a Chicago organizer and attorney, Obama took care to maintain friendly ties to the Daley administration, but in his 1996 campaign for state senate, he specifically avoided asking the mayor or the mayor's closest allies for support. Obama's plan was to make an end run around Chicago's governing Democratic political network by building a coalition of left-leaning black churches and radical secular organizations like ACORN (perhaps with de facto help from liberal-foundation money as well). This coalition would provide Obama with the flexibility to play out a political career some distance to the left of conventional Illinois Democratic politics. And sure enough, Obama's extremely liberal record in Illinois proved to be of a piece with his strategy.

It could be argued that the new and supposedly moderate Obama of 2008 is the real Obama. Unfortunately, that argument is unconvincing. As De Zutter notes, Obama gave up a near-certain Supreme Court clerkship to come to Chicago and do community organizing, so he must have felt strongly about it. (See "The Organizer," by Byron York, in this issue.) He could have joined one of the many other, less-radical black churches on the South Side of Chicago, if that was all he needed to launch a political career. And given his good relations with the Daley administration, Obama could have asked for its support in his bid for the state senate. Yet at every turn, Obama took a riskier path. That suggests he was operating from conviction. Trouble is, the conviction in question was apparently Obama's belief in the sort of radical social and economic views held by groups like ACORN and preachers like Wright and Pfleger.

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If there is any doubt about the accuracy of De Zutter's detailed account, we get the same message from a little-discussed but revealing and important piece by Obama himself. In 1988, just after he joined Trinity, Obama wrote an article titled "Why Organize? Problems and Promise in the Inner City" (which was reprinted in the 1990 book *After Alinsky: Community Organizing in Illinois*). It shows exactly what Obama hoped to make of his association with Pfleger and Wright.

Obama begins by rejecting the false dichotomy between radicalism and moderation: "From W. E. B. DuBois to Booker T. Washington to Marcus Garvey to Malcolm X to Martin Luther King, this internal debate has raged between integration and nationalism, between accommodation and militancy, between sit-down strikes and boardroom negotiations." Unsurprisingly, Obama proposes to use the best from both approaches. Of course, even James Cone, the radical founder of black-liberation theology, sees himself as synthesizing the moderation of Martin Luther King Jr. with the radicalism of Malcolm X.

Obama continues: "Nowhere is the promise of organizing more apparent than in the traditional black churches. Possessing tremendous financial resources, membership and—most importantly—values and biblical traditions that call for empowerment and liberation, the black church is clearly a slumbering giant in the political and economic landscape of cities like Chicago." After expressing disappointment with apolitical black churches focused only on traditional community services, Obama goes on to point in a more activist direction:

> Over the past few years, however, more and more young and forward-thinking pastors have begun to look at community organizations such as the Developing Communities Project in the far south side . . . as a powerful tool for living the social gospel, one which can educate and empower entire congregations and not just serve as a platform for a few prophetic leaders. Should a mere 50 prominent black churches, out of thousands that exist in cities like Chicago, decide to collaborate with a trained and organized staff, enormous positive changes could be wrought.

Give me 50 Pflegers or 50 Wrights, Obama is saying, tie them to a network of grassroots activists like my companions from Acorn, and we can revolutionize urban politics.

So it would appear that Obama's own writings solve the mystery of why he stayed at Trinity for 20 years. Obama's long-held and decidedly audacious hope has been to spread Wright's radical spirit by linking it to a viable, left-leaning political program, with Obama himself at the center. The revolutionizing power of a politically awakened black church is not a side issue, or merely a personal matter, but has been the signature theme of Obama's grand political strategy.

After the 2004 election, there was some talk of the Democratic party's "purging" such radical elements as MoveOn and Michael Moore. Far from purging its radical Left, however, the Democratic party is now just inches away from placing it in the driver's seat. That is the real meaning of the fiasco at Trinity Church. **NR**

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■ EDUCATION

Schooling The Capital

The uphill struggle for school choice in D.C.

JOHN J. MILLER

TIFFANY DUNSTON may come from a poverty-line background, but she appears to have a bright future. On May 22, this African-American scholarship student graduated as valedictorian from Archbishop Carroll High School in Washington, D.C. Her class-topping grade-point average of 4.1 earned her a spot at Syracuse University, which she plans to attend in the fall. She'd like to major in biochemistry.

Yet if congressional liberals have their way, there won't be another Tiffany Dunston. That's because she's the beneficiary of something called the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program—a federally funded school-choice initiative that lets a small number of poor kids opt out of public schools and attend private ones instead. "It is a wonderful program because I was able to choose a great school," said Dunston in a recent interview with the *Catholic Standard*, a newspaper published by the Archdiocese of Washington.

What's a wonder for Dunston, however, is a heresy for the powerful teachers' unions that hold so much sway in the Democratic party. At a hearing on April 30, D.C. delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton reiterated her longstanding opposition to the school-choice scholarships, which are funded through the 2008-09 school year but not beyond. "This is scary for us," says Virginia Walden Ford, who leads D.C. Parents for School Choice, a grassroots group. "The children of single mothers and working-class parents deserve to have this program renewed."

For at least a generation, many conservatives and libertarians have sympathized. Although they've launched limited programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland and have won an important legal victory before the Supreme Court, they've also seen their broader ambitions blocked time and again. Today, fewer than 25,000 students—out of a potential 50 million—take part in school-choice programs that involve private schools. The latest setback came in November, when more than 62 percent of voters in Utah rejected a bill that the legislature and governor had approved. The defeat has forced some school-choice proponents to doubt their political goals. "If vouchers can't pass voter scrutiny in conservative Utah," asked Sol Stern of the Manhattan Institute, "how probable is it that they will do so anywhere else?"

That's a good question. Yet today in Washington, D.C., even former mayor and current city-council member Marion Barry is an advocate of school choice. "I know it may surprise some that I would support a school voucher program, but I am proud to do so," he recently wrote. This unlikely conversion and a few similar ones may suggest that it's too soon to sell school choice short. In the last decade, the nation's capital has become a laboratory of school reform. About one-third of all public-school students now attend charter schools, which receive taxpayer funding but don't have to follow all of the rules and regulations that hobble their more conventional counterparts. What's more, an authentic school-choice program has taken root. The result is a small success story of Republican governance, at a time when many Americans have questioned the ability of Republicans to govern.

The GOP doesn't run Washington—Democrats dominate the District of Columbia. But Congress has a strong voice in the city's affairs, and the story of school reform in Washington begins shortly after the historic GOP congressional victories of 1994. Speaker Newt Gingrich tapped Wisconsin congressman Steve Gunderson to head an effort on improving education in Washington. It was a shrewd choice. Gunderson was a moderate who possessed the ability to work with Democrats more effectively than many other Republicans could. He started out as a school-choice skeptic, but became open to the idea and eventually pushed for it. The roadblock came during negotiations with the Senate, when Jim Jeffords of Vermont—then a Republican, but later an "independent" who caucused with the Democrats—insisted on removing a school-choice pilot project from a D.C. funding bill. Although Gunderson was ready to make lots of potential compromises, such as restricting school choice to elementary-school kids, Jeffords wouldn't budge.

"I remember one meeting in Bob Dole's office with Gingrich and Jeffords," says Theodor Rebarber, a former Gunderson staffer. "When Jeffords said he would prefer no reform to a reform that includes vouchers, Gingrich just blew up at him. He scolded Jeffords for caring more about bureaucrats and unions than about children."

Talks dragged on but didn't get far. They were finally overwhelmed by the budget deadlock between the Republican Congress and President Clinton that had caused the federal government to shut down its nonessential services. When the two sides agreed to a massive funding bill, Gingrich and Gunderson slipped in a provision for charter schools in Washington. By pushing hard for school choice, they had created the political space for a less-radical reform that was nevertheless dramatic in its own right. Today, the District of Columbia is widely seen as having one of the country's most robust charter-school laws. Gunderson didn't seek re-election in 1996; two years later, the Republican Congress actually sent a D.C. school-choice bill to the president's desk, but Clinton vetoed it.

School choice might have died there, except that some local Democrats in Washington began to think twice about the idea. One of the first converts was Kevin Chavous, a member of the city council who represented one of the poorest wards. "I didn't know much about education when I started out," he says. "But then I saw that we were getting more funding for schools, we were losing students, and our outputs were still going down. It convinced me that the problem wasn't money. I became ready to support anything that would help children learn." He became a strong advocate for charter schools and even private-school choice. "Ted Kennedy questioned my party affiliation," he says. (Kennedy is a longtime member of the Senate education committee.)

Meanwhile, Washington's charter schools began to flourish and drew support from several Senate Democrats, including Dianne Feinstein of California and Mary Landrieu of Louisiana. Separately, the Washington Scholarship Fund, a nonprofit group, offered privately funded vouchers to several hundred children in public schools. The constituency for school reform in

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general and school choice in particular was growing.

The election of George W. Bush as president marked a turning point: It meant that congressional Republicans could pass a school-choice bill for Washington and it wouldn't be vetoed. In 2003, that's what happened, in the wake of negotiations with then-mayor Anthony Williams, a Democrat. "At first, I said we couldn't support this right-wing thing," says Williams. "Then I thought about how I went to parochial schools and then on to Yale and Harvard. I decided that if private schools were good enough for me, they're good enough for parents in Washington." It didn't hurt that the Bush administration agreed to increase funding for D.C.'s charter schools and public schools by the same amount of money it proposed to put into the school-choice program. "That was crucial," says Jeanne Allen of the Center for Education Reform. "It took away the argument that school choice steals money from public schools."

Today, about 1,850 students in Washington attend private schools on federally funded scholarships. They come from families with an average household income of about $23,000, and many live in public housing. "We've been at maximum capacity since our second year," says Greg Cork of the Washington Scholarship Fund, which administers the program. "Demand is very high. We get four or five applications for every scholarship that we can award."

Surveys suggest that parents who have children in the school-choice program are happy with it. Their emergence as a potential voting bloc has caught the eye of many local politicians. Delegate Norton remains intransigent: "We have to protect the children, who are the truly innocent victims here," she recently said. Yet much of the city's Democratic political establishment has come around. The current mayor, Adrian Fenty, is a former aide to Chavous who has called on Congress to let school choice live. The editorial page of the *Washington Post*, normally liberal, also has endorsed school choice. Michelle Rhee, the city's school chancellor, recently told the *Wall Street Journal*: "I would *never*, as long as I am in this role, do anything to limit another parent's ability to make a choice for their child. Ever." Despite this enthusiasm, not all are optimistic about how school choice will fare in a Democrat-controlled Congress. "I hope and pray that it survives, but the outlook is tough," says Williams.

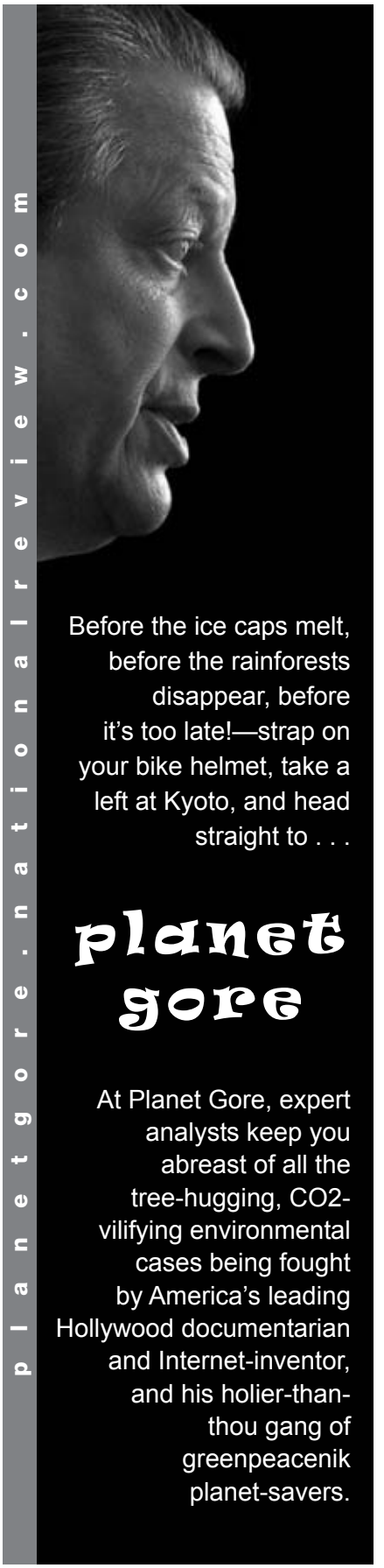
The presidential election may determine its fate. John McCain is a school-choice supporter. Barack Obama's views are a little more complicated. In February, he told the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* that he was disinclined to support school choice but that he was willing to take an open-minded look at data. "If there was any argument for vouchers it was, all right, let's see if the experiment works, and if it does, whatever my preconception, you do what's best for kids," he said. His campaign later issued a clarification, saying that Obama's education agenda "does not include vouchers, in any shape or form."

The good news is that if Obama was doing more than merely pandering to Wisconsin primary voters who support school choice in Milwaukee, he'll learn that school-choice programs appear to boost academic performance. "I know of ten valid studies," says Patrick Wolf of the University of Arkansas. "Nine of them show at least some gains for those who participate in school choice. The one that doesn't is starting to look like an outlier." Wolf is now leading an investigation into school choice in D.C. for the U.S. Department of Education. A new report on the program's first 19 months is due out at any moment.

Frontline educators will be interested in the data, but many of them are already sold on the merits of school choice. At Archbishop Carroll High School, about one-sixth of the students receive school-choice scholarships. "I think the program works," says vice principal Beth Blaufuss. "The Opportunity Scholars are fitting in—it's impossible to see an academic difference between students who are Opportunity Scholars and those who aren't."

Even if school choice dies in D.C., it isn't necessarily dead elsewhere. In May, Georgia approved a $50 million tax-credit program that will make private schools more affordable. In Louisiana, a bipartisan coalition led by Republican governor Bobby Jindal is pushing for $10 million in scholarships for 1,500 students in New Orleans. "We have a lot of momentum," says John Schilling of the Alliance for School Choice.

Yet the country's next big battle over school choice now appears set for Washington, D.C.—as a defensive action rather than an offensive one. It's a predicament to which conservatives may have to become distressingly accustomed. **NR**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■ CANADA

Chilling Effect

The Great White North's Brave New World

MARK HEMINGWAY

CANADA is no longer a free country. That's the inescapable conclusion for anyone following the country's "human rights" tribunals.

For five days straight, starting on June 2, the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal held a hearing in Vancouver to determine whether NATIONAL REVIEW's Mark Steyn and the Canadian newsweekly *Maclean's* should be fined or censured. The offense? *Maclean*'s printed an excerpt from Steyn's best-selling book *America Alone*.

The excerpt in question argued that, owing to demographic trends, the Western world will increasingly be forced to confront the problems of radical Islam. The Canadian Islamic Congress—a radical Muslim group whose founder, Dr. Mohamed Elmasry, once claimed on Canadian radio that all adult Israelis were justifiable targets of Palestinian violence—objected. The group filed a complaint with the national government's human-rights commission, and those of two provinces.

These commissions were originally set up to address basic questions in discrimination law, such as discriminatory hiring or housing practices. However, the national commission's overzealous prosecution of a white-supremacist leader eventually led to the 1990 Canadian Supreme Court decision *Canada (Human Rights Commission)* v. *Taylor*. Since the ruling, Canadian law has been interpreted to mean that human-rights commissions, whether at the provincial or national level, have the authority to impose civil penalties on those responsible for any "telecommunication" that is "likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt by reason of the fact that that person or those persons are identifiable on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination."

Ever since, human-rights commissions have been stomping all over the Canadian charter of rights; in their attempt to take on Steyn and *Maclean's*, their hubris may have reached its zenith.

The tribunal in Vancouver was, as expected, a complete travesty. Such tribunals determine guilt, but are largely administrative in process: There are no evidentiary rules, no standards for due process, and no basic legal protections for the accused; truth isn't necessarily a defense. Meanwhile, the state picks up the tab for the complainants' representation, while the accused can incur tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees.

Andrew Coyne of *Maclean's* blogged the proceedings in real time, and his descriptions are, frankly, astonishing. Commissioners routinely recessed to determine the eligibility of evidence; the complainants' lawyers would dash off mid-hearing to print Internet material to introduce as evidence five minutes later; an "expert" witness appeared whose chief credential may well be academic papers on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; and the complainants repeatedly accused Steyn and *Maclean's* of being responsible for hateful blog comments neither had anything to do with.

And now, while Steyn and *Maclean's* wait anxiously to learn what thought crimes they are guilty of, they're staring down the barrel of yet another trial at the national level, complete with redundant penalties and yet more legal costs. (The Ontario Human Rights Tribunal declined to hear the complaint, because the province's human-rights laws specifically forbid regulating the press—but the tribunal's chief commissioner issued an unsolicited statement condemning Steyn and *Maclean's* "Islamophobia.")

There's no obvious reason for optimism in the case of the B.C. tribunal, and the outcome of the national one is practically foreordained. In the Canadian Human Rights Commission's 31 years of existence, *not a single person or entity has been acquitted* of the charge Steyn and *Maclean's* are facing.

And while the Canadian and U.S. press shamefully ignored the goings-on in Vancouver, they paid even less attention when the Alberta Human Rights Commission ruled against the Rev. Stephen Boissoin. In 2002, Boissoin wrote a fire-and-brimstone letter to the editor of an Alberta newspaper calling gay people "wicked." An impolitic opinion, but Boissoin's letter contained no incitements to violence. Two years later, an anti-Christian activist filed a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission. In 2007, Boissoin appeared before a tribunal and was found guilty of, well, something.

The tribunal finally handed down its sentence at the beginning of this month. Aside from a $7,000 fine, "Mr. Boissoin and [his organization] The Concerned Christian Coalition Inc. shall cease publishing in newspapers, by email, on the radio, in public speeches, or on the

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Internet, in future, disparaging remarks about gays and homosexuals." Boissoin is further not allowed to make "disparaging" remarks against Darren Lund, the university professor who filed the charges against him. At one point the ruling actually says, "Mr. Boissoin is to apologize for submitting the article and for *his views on homosexuality*." (Emphasis added.) Boissoin's *views* are unacceptable, and as such he is guilty of thought crime.

Perhaps the ruling shouldn't surprise anyone. The year Boissoin wrote his letter, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission ordered the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* and Hugh Owens each to pay $1,500 to three complainants for running an ad that quoted Bible verses condemning homosexuality.

The good news is that the days of human-rights tribunals handing down such Orwellian rulings may be numbered. "I'm hoping that we lose this at the hearing level, and that we appeal it to a proper court of law—as opposed to these quasi-judicial tribunals," Andrew Coyne of *Maclean's* told National Review Online. "And at that proper court of law, that we make the constitutional argument that this is an infringement of our charter rights to freedom of the press. I believe that's what we'll do if we lose the case." *Maclean's* is a beloved institution in Canada, with 2.8 million readers, so the publication has both the bully pulpit and the resources to explore legal avenues.

Further, the grumblings are getting louder within the ruling Conservative party that something should be done about these star chambers. A Liberal party MP, Keith Martin, has introduced what's known in parliamentary terms as a "private member's bill" to strike the section of the Canadian Human Rights Act that deals with regulating telecommunications.

Unfortunately, despite some political opposition, there's little evidence that these show trials will end anytime soon, and it's highly unlikely anything will happen before Steyn and *Maclean's* come before the national tribunal. For now, the Great White North remains a Brave New World: Woe betide the Canadian who dares to have an objectionable opinion. **NR**

■ **CULTURE WATCH**

A Day Of Golf

The USGA Museum reopens

JAY NORDLINGER

Far Hills, N.J.

Along the winding driveway, there are banners picturing golf greats. First Tiger Woods, then Annika Sorenstam (who has been, roughly, the Tiger Woods of the ladies' tour). Then Jack Nicklaus, then Mickey Wright (née Mary Kathryn). Then Gene Sarazen and Patty Berg.

So, they've gone boy-girl, boy-girl.

Who are "they"? The United States Golf Association, or the "USGA," as everyone knows it. We are at their headquarters in remote, country New Jersey—it is "BYOO-colic," as a friend of mine remarks. Today is the grand opening, or reopening, of the USGA Museum. It was closed for three years. And they've added an attractive wing, called the Arnold Palmer Center for Golf History.

Once upon a time, there was just "Golf House"—a stately Georgian home designed in the 1910s by John Russell Pope (of Jefferson Memorial and National Gallery fame). Now the USGA has a veritable compound. But it is the house that draws your eye. Among its pillars hang two banners, one of Bobby Jones, the other of Arnold Palmer.

The USGA Museum is sort of like the Smithsonian, which has been called "America's attic." The Smithsonian has Lindbergh's plane and Archie Bunker's chair; the golf museum has Jones's putter and Ben Hogan's 1-iron.

This is a perfect day for the reopening, with sparkling warm weather. "What is so rare as a day in June?" And, perhaps appropriately for June, the place looks set up for a wedding, with white tents and a chamber ensemble. (It is an all-brass group.) Everyone has a lovely time; everyone's tickled to be here.

The USGA has a variety of responsibilities, among them the running of our national golf tournaments: the U.S. Amateur, the U.S. Open, etc. They also write and interpret the rules of golf—no, excuse me, the Rules of Golf. They do this in conjunction with the Royal and Ancient Golf Club in St. Andrews. And they test golf equipment, to make sure that these items—mainly clubs and balls—are in conformity with the rules.

A lot of us think that the equipment has gone crazy—that it has gone too far. (In the case of balls, literally.) But that is an argument for another day.

We visitors get tours of the Research and Test Center, where Iron Byron once reigned. "Iron Byron" was the name of the machine that tested balls—that swatted them. It was named after Byron Nelson, who had a remarkably consistent swing. A picture of an older Nelson, at the finish of his swing, graces a wall here. The new "Iron Byron" is computerized, and swings a lot faster. A technician taps a keyboard, and off it goes.

Out on the grounds, a crowd surrounds someone, and cameras flash. Must be Palmer—and, lo, it is. At 78, he is still a rock star, mobbed wherever he goes. The fans want autographs, and Palmer duly complies—he looks grim as he goes about this business. The fans are none too decorous, either: They are pushy, grabby, heedless. Was the autograph culture always this bad?

And here is another question: In the span of his career, has Arnold signed more autographs than he has hit golf balls? The numbers must be dizzying.

I think of Lynn Swann, whose race for governor of Pennsylvania I covered two years ago. He is a former football great (Pittsburgh Steelers). And, during the campaign, he had a rule: no autographs. And he was asked for them, constantly. I thought this was rather awkward, but he insisted that, if he started signing, he would not be able to move. He would be absolutely stuck.

I think back to this as Palmer is stuck.

Later, unstuck, he gives a press conference, at which he is asked about Tiger: Will the young champ be able to overcome

Mr. Nordlinger is an NR senior editor. *Here, There & Everywhere: Collected Writings of Jay Nordlinger* is available at Store.NationalReview.com. There is a chapter on golf.

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his bum knee? Palmer says yes—he himself had a bum knee, and worked through it. Tiger should be able to march on.

Before long, it's time for the ceremony—the official reopening ceremony. It's held out on the lawn, in front of the house. Near the dais, a brass ensemble is playing a Purcell trumpet voluntary (as at a wedding). They also play some jazz and some patriotic music. Then comes a bagpipe band, as we must have, because golf comes from Scotland. They play—as they must—"Scotland the Brave." It never fails to stir. And finally, we have our national anthem—hands go on hearts.

The emcee of the ceremony is Dottie Pepper, a former LPGA star and current TV commentator. She recalls an early Palmer book, subtitled "Hit It Hard!" This brings a chuckle from the audience, and from Arnold. In due course, a video is shown, featuring an assortment of champions. Someone in the video comments on Nicklaus's supremacy. I look at Arnold's face, which remains impassive. Nicklaus talk, he's used to (or ought to be, by now).

One of the speakers is Carol Semple Thompson, the greatest woman golfer of our time—greatest woman amateur golfer. She has won seven USGA championships. She describes herself as "the ultimate USGA brat": Both of her parents were USGA officials. They had a rule in their family: All five kids had to play golf till they broke 90. Then they could quit. The only one who didn't quit was Carol.

Today is Arnold Palmer Day, not just here in Far Hills, but in New Jersey at large. On hand to confirm this is Nancy Byrne, who's the state's executive director for travel and tourism. Charmingly and almost gigglingly, she says that this is her best day ever on the job. One can believe it.

There is lots and lots of Palmer hagiography—lots and lots of Arnie-worship. At least one speaker goes way over the top. There is a video too, honoring Palmer. Incidentally, the most engaging person on it—the best communicator—is President Bush (43). (His dad, 41, is honorary chairman of the USGA President's Council.)

The most iconic photo in American golf: Hogan, 1-iron, 72nd hole, 1950 U.S. Open, Merion Golf Club, Philadelphia

HY PESKIN/TIME & LIFE PICTURES/GETTY

This day has been strangely Arnold-centric, and so is the remodeled and expanded USGA Museum. His *name* is on it, for goodness' sake. Palmer is a great golfer, sure. But there have been many others: Jones, Nelson, Hogan; Nicklaus, Trevino, Watson. Palmer won a U.S. Am, a U.S. Open, and a U.S. Senior Open. Nicklaus won two, four, and two. Woods won *three* Ams (in a row), and (as of this writing) has won two Opens. Jones and Hogan won four Opens, Hale Irwin won three . . .

But statistics are beside the point: Should one man be so dominant at USGA headquarters, which should be sort of a national church of golf—above person, or at least a single person?

At any rate, Arnold is a big name and bursts with star power. He was key in the popularization of the game. And he has, it's true, been particularly associated with the USGA. For example, he has done many television spots inviting golfers—hack and ace alike—to become USGA members.

He is the final speaker, and when he steps up to the mike, I feel almost sorry for him. He has been built up like crazy, and what can he say? But he rises to the occasion—in part by saying that he hardly deserves all this praise. He reads a stilted speech, stiltedly. But he soon puts down his text and looks at the audience: He says how flattered he is, and how much he appreciates the support of the USGA—particularly its nearly 1 million members.

And, except for the New Jersey lady, Arnold has been the briefest speaker of all.

He goes inside the museum, becoming, I suppose, the official first visitor. The museum is an excellent thing: tasteful, informative, and rich. I pause in the Bobby Jones Room, which has the man's passport, law license, and other articles. And I pause at the World War II exhibit.

Among its items are golf balls made by American POWs. Golf has been played by our boys in conflicts all around the world—often in a makeshift way. It is ingrained in the American tradition. President Bush is refusing to play golf while we are at war: He thinks it's unseemly for the commander-in-chief to be seen engaged in that pastime. A lot of us think this is deeply misguided—but the buck stops you-know-where.

Another exhibit highlights a couple of comebacks: one by Hogan, one by Babe Didrikson Zaharias. Hogan, of course, came back from a near-fatal car accident. Babe came back from cancer surgery—for a while (she died at 45). In 1954, she won the Open by twelve shots. If you will forgive a glib formulation, her caddie carried her golf clubs, and she carried a colostomy bag. What a woman.

Those of us who love golf history have a special home in Far Hills—we thrill to it. But the present's not so bad either. Early in the day, a man who has been around golf for a while said to me—quite out of the blue—"Aren't we lucky to live in the age of Tiger? Aren't we lucky to be able to see him play?" We are. And we're just lucky for golf, plain and simple. **NR**

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■ COVER STORY

The Organizer

What did Barack Obama really do in Chicago?

BYRON YORK

Chicago

Barack Obama often cites his time as a community organizer here in Chicago as one of the experiences that qualify him to hold the nation's highest office. "I can bring this country together," he said in a debate last February. "I have a track record, starting from the days I moved to Chicago as a community organizer."

When Obama says such things, the reaction among many observers is: *Huh?*

Audiences understand when he mentions his years as an Illinois state legislator, or his brief tenure in the U.S. Senate. But a community organizer? What's that?

Even Obama didn't know when he first gave it a try back in 1985. "When classmates in college asked me just what it was that a community organizer did, I couldn't answer them directly," Obama wrote in his memoir, *Dreams from My Father*. "Instead, I'd pronounce on the need for change. Change in the White House, where Reagan and his minions were carrying on their dirty deeds. Change in the Congress, compliant and corrupt. Change in the mood of the country, manic and self-absorbed. Change won't come from the top, I would say. Change will come from a mobilized grass roots."

If you substitute "Bush" for "Reagan," you have a fairly accurate description of Obama's 2008 campaign. That's not a coincidence; it suggests that something about community organizing was central to Obama's world view back then, and has remained central to his development as the politician he is today. What was it?

I counted myself among those who didn't have a good idea of what a community organizer does. So I came here to learn more about Obama's time in the job, from 1985 to 1988. What did he *do?* What did he accomplish? And what in his experience here stands as a qualification to be president of the United States?

THE RADICAL'S RULES

Perhaps the simplest way to describe community organizing is to say it is the practice of identifying a specific aggrieved population, say unemployed steelworkers, or itinerant fruit-pickers, or residents of a particularly bad neighborhood, and agitating them until they become so upset about their condition that they take collective action to put pressure on local, state, or federal officials to fix the problem, often by giving the affected group money. Organizers like to call that "direct action."

Community organizing is most identified with the left-wing Chicago activist Saul Alinsky (1909-72), who pretty much defined the profession. In his classic book, *Rules for Radicals*, Alinsky wrote that a successful organizer should be "an abrasive agent to rub raw the resentments of the people of the community; to fan latent hostilities of many of the people to the point of overt expressions." Once such hostilities were "whipped up to a fighting pitch," Alinsky continued, the organizer steered his group toward confrontation, in the form of picketing, demonstrating, and general hell-raising. At first, the organizer tackled small stuff, like demanding the repair of streetlights in a city park; later, when the group gained confidence, the organizer could take on bigger targets. But at all times, the organizer's goal

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was not to lead his people anywhere, but to encourage them to take action on their own behalf.

Alinsky started in the 1930s with workers in the Chicago stockyards. Many years later, when Obama arrived here, he came from a different perspective.

"Barack had been very inspired by the civil-rights movement," Jerry Kellman, the organizer who hired Obama, told me recently. "I felt that he wanted to work in the civil-rights movement, but he was ten years too late, and this was the closest he could find to it at the time." Obama, in his memoir, put it more simply when he said he went to Chicago to "organize black folks."

Kellman, a New Yorker who had gotten into organizing in the 1960s, was trying to help laid-off factory workers on the far South Side of Chicago. He led a group, the Calumet Community Religious Conference, that had been created by several local Catholic churches. The Calumet region—basically the farthest southern reaches of Chicago plus the suburbs in northern Indiana—was an industrial area that had been hard hit by the closings of Wisconsin Steel and other industries.

The 'Training Salary'

Obama often talks about how little he was paid as a community organizer. "One day, a small group of churches on the South Side of Chicago offered me a job to come work as a community organizer," he told the graduating class at Wesleyan University in late May. "Twelve thousand a year, plus $2,000 for an old, beat-up car. And I said yes." Talking to the people Obama worked with, one gets the impression that he's made a little too much of the money thing; Obama wasn't going to get rich being a community organizer, but the money wasn't all that bad. "That was a training salary," Kellman told me when I asked about the $12,000 salary. "If someone did OK, they'd make more. After three or four months, he was up to $20,000, and after three years he was probably making $35,000 or so."

CHRIS CARLSON/AP

Reminiscing at Wesleyan, May 2008

Kellman and the churches hoped to get some of those jobs back.

But there was a problem in the Chicago part of the equation. The area involved, around the Altgeld Gardens housing project and the neighborhood of Roseland, was nearly 100 percent black. Kellman was white, as were others who worked for CCRC. "The people didn't open up to him like they would to somebody who was black and really understood what was going on in their lives," Yvonne Lloyd, one of the key "leaders"—that is, local residents who worked closely with Obama—told me. "Black people are very leery when you come into their community and they don't know you." Lloyd and another leader, Loretta Augustine-Herron, insisted that Kellman hire a black organizer for a new spinoff from CCRC to be called the Developing Communities Project, which would focus solely on the Chicago part of the area.

So Kellman set out to find a black organizer. He ran an ad in some trade publications, and Obama responded. But at first Kellman wasn't sure Obama was right for the job. "My wife was Japanese-American," Kellman recalled. "I showed her the résumé, with the background in Hawaii. The name's Obama, so I asked, 'Could this be Japanese?' She said, 'Sure, it could be.'" It was only when Kellman talked to Obama on the phone, and Obama "expressed interest in something African-American culturally," that a relieved Kellman offered Obama the job.

But Kellman had to sell Obama to the leaders. "Jerry introduces Barack, and Barack is so young, it's like, 'Oh my God,'" Loretta Augustine-Herron remembered. Obama was obviously smart, and he wanted to be an organizer, but he was, in fact, quite young (24) and he didn't actually know much about the job. Despite those drawbacks, he seemed to work some sort of magic on the leaders. "He had a sensitivity I have never seen in anybody else to this day," Augustine-Herron told me. "He understood." The women were sold. "He didn't have experience," Augustine-Herron said. "But he had a sensitivity that allowed us to believe that he could do the job." So Obama it was.

WHAT'S YOUR SELF-INTEREST?

New to Chicago, Obama set about conducting dozens of one-on-ones, that is, individual interviews with South Side residents in which he tried to discover which issues were most important to them. "You have to understand a person's self-interest—that's Alinsky's terminology," Mike Kruglik, an organizer who worked with Kellman and Obama, told me. "What's happened to that person in his or her life? Where are they going? Why are they going there? What are they really passionate about?"

After the initial interviewing, Obama went to work on a number of projects.

The long-term goal was to retrain workers in order to restore manufacturing jobs in the area; Kellman took Obama by the rusted-out, closed-down Wisconsin Steel plant for a firsthand look. But the whole thing was a bit of a pipe dream, as the leaders soon discovered. "The idea was to interview these people and look at education, transferable skills, so that we could refer them to other industries," Loretta Augustine-Herron told me as we drove by the site of the old factory, now completely torn down. "Well, they had no transferable skills. I remember interviewing one man who ran a steel-straightening machine. It

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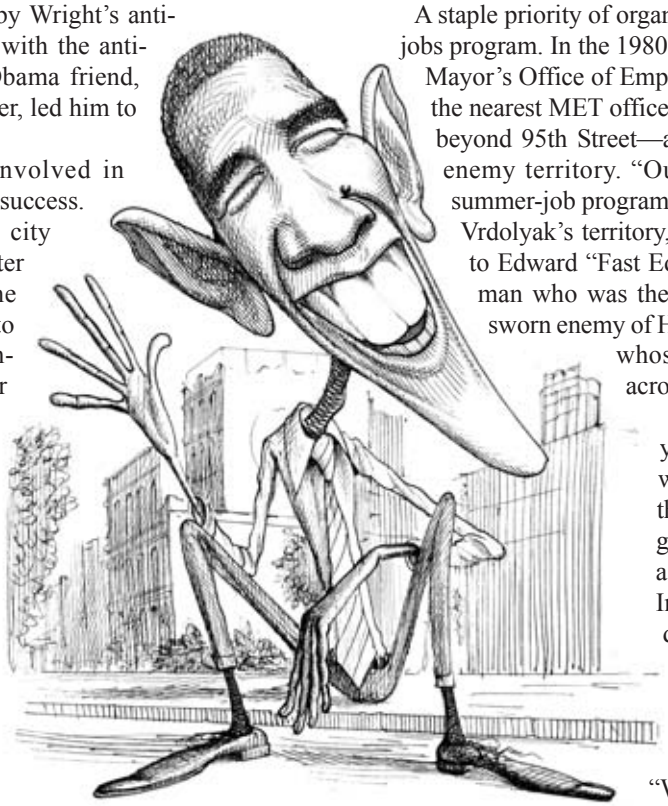
straightened steel bars or something. I said, well, what did you do? And he told me he pushed a button, and the rods came in, and he pushed a button and it straightened them, and he pushed a button and it sent them somewhere else. That's all he did. And he made big bucks doing it."

That, of course, was one of the reasons the steel mill closed. And it became clear that neither Obama nor Kellman nor anyone else was going to change the direction of the steel industry and its unions in the United States. Somewhere along the line, everyone realized that those jobs wouldn't be coming back.

So Obama looked for new opportunities. One thing he spent a lot of time on was creating a network of contacts beyond the white Catholic priests who originally sponsored the Developing Communities Project. "Many of the parishes were in predominantly African-American communities, and I think all of the priests were non-African-American," Rev. Alvin Love, head of the Lilydale First Baptist Church on 113th Street, told me. "Barack came to me and wanted to try to connect with the whole community."

Trying to construct a wide-ranging alliance of churches, Obama succeeded with Love and a few other ministers, but he was hampered by the fact that he didn't go to church himself. "I said, 'If you go to a pastor, and you ask him to come get involved in a community effort, and you say you have a group of churches, and that pastor asks you what church you belong to, and you say none—then it's hard to get that pastor on board,'" Love recalled telling Obama. "He said, 'I know, I understand, I'm working on it.' He said, 'I believe, I'm just waiting for the right spot, the right place, the right time.'" Love wasn't the only minister to bring that up with Obama, and before long Obama, drawn to the preaching of Rev. Jeremiah Wright, joined Trinity United Church of Christ on 95th Street—where he would stay until political pressure created by Wright's anti-American outbursts, combined with the anti-white message from another Obama friend, South Side priest Michael Pfleger, led him to resign his church membership.

Obama got the ministers involved in several projects, without great success. There was a push to get more city money for South Side parks after the Justice Department told the Chicago Park District it had to spend more on minority neighborhoods. There were plans for after-school programs, and job retraining for adults. But if you ask Obama's fellow organizers what his most significant accomplishments were, they point to two ventures: the expansion of a city summer-job program for South Side teenagers and the removal of asbestos from one of the area's oldest housing projects. Those, they say, were his biggest victories.



ROMAN GENN

'WE JUST FOUND OURSELVES AN ISSUE'

If you start in Chicago's downtown Loop area, and drive south on the Bishop Ford Expressway, you'll come to the 130th Street Exit amid an almost surreal landscape. To the left, there is the massive Continental Grain elevator complex, looming like a cluster of skyscrapers, with a rusting tanker moored nearby in the Calumet River. Not far away are a number of rotting, shut-down businesses. Farther south, there is the Waste Management CID Landfill, a vast, and growing, mountain of garbage. And to the right, there is the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant, better known as the sludge plant, treating sewage from all around the region. And in the middle of it all is Altgeld Gardens, a sprawling brick low-rise housing project built in the 1940s in what is probably the least people-friendly location one could ever imagine.

Loretta Augustine-Herron lived here for a while in the 1960s, and one day in May she took me around in her pickup truck. In those days, she said, there was an awful smell coming across 130th Street from the sludge plant. "Sometimes when the wind blew the wrong way, you could not take a deep breath," she said. "It was horrible." And isolated, too: Then, as now, there were no stores, or restaurants, or much of anything in easy walking distance of Altgeld. You can't take a train, because there are none around. And you can forget about a taxi. The best way to get around is the bus, which makes regular runs through the complex. Still, the sense of isolation is considerable.

Near the back of the Altgeld complex is a tightly locked gymnasium and a low, brown-brick building closed in by a chain-link fence, topped in places with barbed wire. It is Our Lady of the Gardens church, where Augustine-Herron and Yvonne Lloyd met, and where they got to know Barack Obama. And it was here that much of his career as an activist was set.

A staple priority of organizers like Obama was the summer-jobs program. In the 1980s the jobs were administered by the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training, or MET, but the nearest MET office to Altgeld was a long way away—beyond 95th Street—and located in what some felt was enemy territory. "Our children, in order to get those summer-job programs, had to go over to the East Side—Vrdolyak's territory," Yvonne Lloyd told me, referring to Edward "Fast Eddie" Vrdolyak, the Chicago alderman who was the champion of white ethnics and a sworn enemy of Harold Washington, the black mayor whose presence had inspired blacks across the city, including Obama.

"So, if you're living in Altgeld, you don't have the bus fare to go way over there, and they were out of their element, and they ended up not getting the jobs." Why not demand a job center in their neighborhood? In *Dreams from My Father*, Obama describes visiting MET headquarters and looking at a brochure listing the locations of all branch offices. There was nothing south of 95th Street. "This is it," he said. "We just found ourselves an issue."

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Obama then choreographed a drive to demand a new MET office. (The point, remember, was not for him to make the demands but for the leaders to do it for themselves.) They set up a meeting with MET officials, and then Obama drilled the leaders on what they should say. He took them around Roseland looking for a possible site for the new office. They found a shutdown department store at Michigan Avenue and 110th Street, and located the building's owners. "He did all the legwork for us and brought it back to us," Lloyd told me, "and we went downtown to the offices of the store and negotiated." In a climactic meeting at Our Lady of the Gardens—Obama had, once again, carefully rehearsed the leaders on what they should say—MET officials agreed to open the new office. Obama had an accomplishment to point to.

"Our kids were able to go there, sign up, and get their summer jobs," Lloyd told me. "It was fantastic to me, I just felt like—oh, it meant so much to us." They were thrilled beyond words when Harold Washington himself came to the ribbon-cutting for the new office.

BATTLE OVER ASBESTOS

The other Obama accomplishment most people mention is the asbestos cleanup at Altgeld. One day someone—it's not clear who—noticed that some rather specialized work seemed to be going on at the management office in the center of the complex. "A young lady came to us and said they've got white suits on and they're doing something in the office," Yvonne Lloyd told me. "We asked them what they were doing and they said, 'We're renovating.' That didn't sound right. Why would they be wearing all this gear if they were just renovating?" It turned out the workers were removing asbestos from the building.

In Obama's telling, the problem was discovered when a young woman noticed a small-print notice in the classified section of a newspaper, soliciting bids for asbestos cleanup at Altgeld. However it began, it didn't take the residents long to guess that if asbestos was in the office, it might be in their apartments, too. That discovery led to Obama's greatest hit as an organizer.

Obama recruited the young woman to pay a visit to the Chicago Housing Authority official who worked at the management office. Obama went too, hoping the official would deny that there was any asbestos in the apartments. "A cover-up would generate as much publicity as the asbestos, I had told myself," Obama wrote in *Dreams from My Father*. "Publicity would make my job easier." And sure enough, the CHA official denied it all.

Obama followed up—had the residents follow up, of course—with letters to top CHA officials. Finally, the group sent a message to the agency's executive director, warning they would show up at his office to demand action. They got in touch with local TV stations, and everyone came to cover the asbestos showdown.

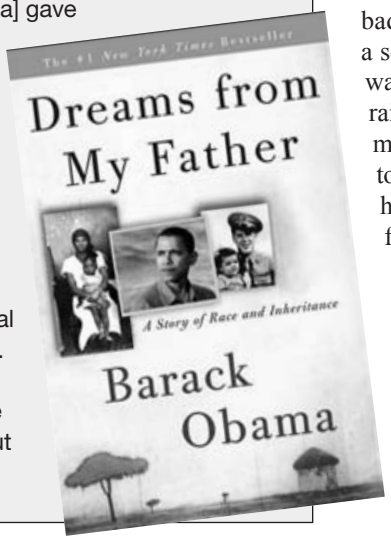
As it turned out, there was no showdown. CHA officials accommodated the protesters, promising to begin testing the Altgeld apartments for asbestos that very day. They also promised to attend a meeting at Our Lady of the Gardens to listen to everyone's concerns. A few weeks later, the director of CHA himself came to the church's gymnasium, where Obama's group was prepared to present a demand for timely repairs. Perhaps 300 people came, along with the TV crews. Things veered toward fiasco when the young woman Obama had chosen to question the CHA director wouldn't give up the microphone so the director could answer. A semi-comic tug-of-war ensued, with the director finally bolting the meeting, followed by an increasingly angry crowd.

It was a fiasco, and racial conspiracy theories quickly spread among the residents. "The whole thing was put together by Vrdolyak," Obama quotes one man saying. "You saw that white man egging the folks on. They just trying to make Harold look bad." Obama was deflated; at the very least, the big show was a setback to his effort. It was precisely the sort of scene he had wanted to avoid. "He said, 'Don't get confrontational, don't raise your voice, don't scream and holler,'" Yvonne Lloyd told me. "He said, 'You'll get more the other way.'" (Jerry Kellman told me that Obama was not "a straight Alinsky organizer," and his advice to Lloyd at Altgeld suggests that he generally preferred to avoid overt confrontation.)

The organizers ended up winning anyway, although the cleanup wasn't finished until years later. But something had changed for Obama during the asbestos fight, and he began to consider leaving Chicago for law school. As he looked back, he believed that, on one hand, he had trained some good people; Loretta Augustine-Herron, for example, told me he inspired her to go to college, which led her to a satisfying career. But on the other hand, Obama seemed to realize that it was very, very hard to get anything done. "He didn't see

The Storyteller

Everyone knows Obama wrote a memoir, *Dreams from My Father*, covering his time in Chicago. What fewer know is that during his years as an organizer Obama was also working hard on fiction-writing. "He wrote stories about the people he was working with," Mike Kruglik told me, "fiction that was beautiful, beautifully crafted, fantastically evocative about what it was like to be in that community, including how bleak the landscape was, how threadbare some of the institutions were, what it looked like and felt like." I asked Kruglik if he had read the stories. "Yeah," he answered. "[Obama] gave them to me. They were about what a pastor was doing with his church." Kruglik says he can't remember much beyond that—this was years ago—but given the prominent role that Obama's pastors and his church have played in the campaign, there would probably be a great deal of interest in the stories today. But you won't get them from Kruglik, who says he gave the stories back to Obama without making any copies.



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organizing making any significant changes in things," Jerry Kellman recalled.

The solution, Obama felt, was to find a way to political power of his own.

"He was constantly thinking about his path to significance and power," Mike Kruglik told me. "He said, 'I need to go there [Harvard Law School] to find out more about power. How do powerful people think? What kind of networks do they have? How do they connect to each other?'"

In a few months, Obama was gone. He had been an organizer for three years. When he returned to Chicago after law school, he did some voter-registration work and then joined a civil-rights practice. In 1996, he ran for the state senate. Eight years later, he was elected to the U.S. Senate, and within a year after that he was exploring a run for president.

THE ORGANIZER

We look to formative experiences to help us understand presidential candidates. Visit an aircraft carrier in wartime and you'll learn something about John McCain. Pilots fly off the deck, and sometimes they come back, and sometimes they don't. One day, McCain didn't, and began the time as a prisoner of war that both revealed his character and launched his political career. No matter what he has done since, the U.S. Navy is the culture that made McCain, with his heavy emphasis on duty, honor, and country.

Community organizing is just as essential in understanding Obama. But what does it say about him?

The first thing is that he has a talent for, well, organizing. Everyone who worked with Obama says he was good at the job. And he has used the techniques he learned in Chicago to organize his own presidential campaign, going so far as to enlist Mike Kruglik to help start a "Camp Obama" program to instill organizing principles into Obama supporters. The result is a campaign that even Obama's opponents admit is a very impressive operation.

But Obama's time in Chicago also revealed the conventionality of his approach to the underlying problems of the South Side. Is the area crippled by a culture of dysfunction? Demand summer jobs. Push for an after-school program. Convince the city to spend more on this or that. It was the same old stuff; Obama could think outside the box on ways to organize people, but not on what he was organizing them *for*.

Certainly no one should live in an apartment contaminated by asbestos, but Obama did not seem to question, or at least question very strongly, the notion that the people he wanted to organize should be living in Altgeld at all. The place was, after all, one of the nation's capitals of dysfunction. "Every ten years I would work on the census," Yvonne Lloyd told me. "I always had Altgeld. When you look at those forms from the census, you had three or four generations in one apartment—the grandmother, the mother, the daughter, and then her baby. It was supposed to be a stepping stone, but you've got people that are never going to leave."

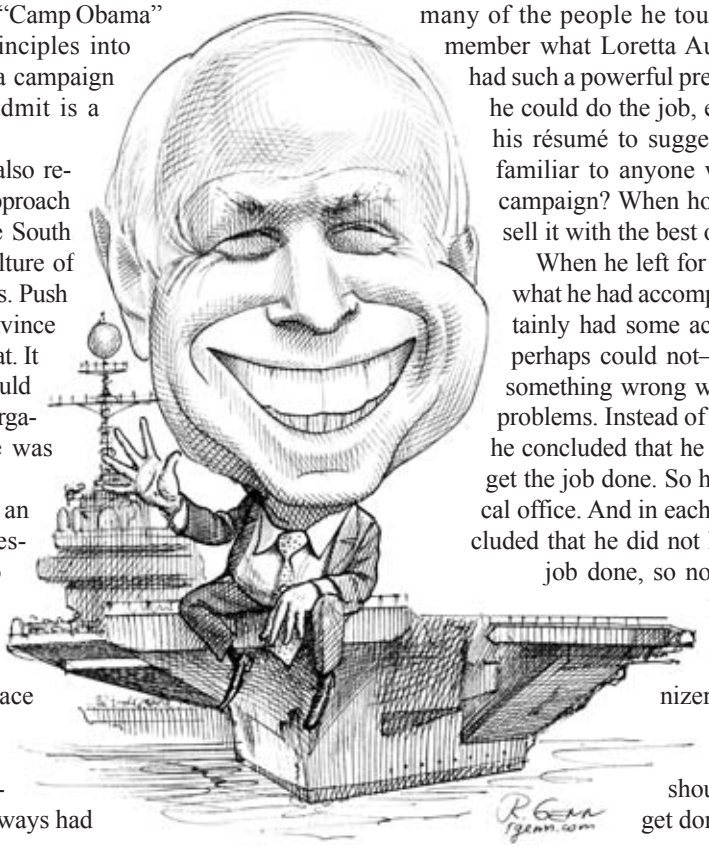
No doubt Obama would agree that that is a bad thing, but when a real attempt to break through that culture of dysfunction—the landmark 1996 welfare-reform bill, now widely accepted as one of the most successful domestic-policy initiatives in a generation—came up, Obama vowed to use all the resources at his disposal to undo it. "I made sure our new welfare system didn't punish people by kicking them off the rolls," he said in 1999. Two years earlier, he had declared: "We want to make sure that there is health care, child care, job training, and transportation vouchers—everything that is needed to ensure that those who need it will have support." Obama applied his considerable organizational skills to perpetuating the old, failed way of doing things.

Obama's professional colleagues, people like Jerry Kellman, believe his lasting accomplishment was to build an organization, the Developing Communities Project, that survived his departure. Today, DCP still exists, run out of a small Methodist church building on 95th Street, working on after-school programs, drug prevention, and voter registration. It has become, much more than it was when Obama was there, a grant-getting institution; according to tax records, about three-quarters of its funding comes from government grants, with the rest from liberal foundations like the Woods Fund, on whose board Obama sat from 1993 to 2002.

Has any of that brought about the change Obama spoke of back in 1985? Not in any large sense. But if Obama doesn't have much to show for his years as an organizer, it's fair to say that many of the people he touched revere him deeply. Remember what Loretta Augustine-Herron said: Obama had such a powerful presence that he made her *believe* he could do the job, even though there was little in his résumé to suggest he could. Does that sound familiar to anyone who has watched the Obama campaign? When hope is the product, Obama can sell it with the best of them.

When he left for law school, Obama wondered what he had accomplished as an organizer. He certainly had some achievements, but he did not—perhaps could not—concede that there might be something wrong with his approach to Chicago's problems. Instead of questioning his own premises, he concluded that he simply needed more power to get the job done. So he made plans to run for political office. And in each successive office, he has concluded that he did not have enough power to get the job done, so now he is running for the most powerful office in the land.

And what if he gets it? He'll be the biggest, strongest organizer in the world. He'll dazzle the country with his message of hope and possibility. But we shouldn't expect much to actually get done. **NR**



ROMAN GENN

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■ 2008 IV

McCain's Challenge

How to preempt Barack's communitarian dream

MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

CONSIDERED purely as a political animal, Senator Obama is unquestionably superior to both his vanquished rival and his prospective one. Whenever, during the primaries, a thwarted Hillary Clinton bared her hyena's teeth, she only made Obama's tact and gracefulness stand out more clearly. Senator McCain, a young eagle in his Navy photographs, is an old bird in comparison with the junior senator from Illinois.

Can Obama be stopped?

Remember, first, that it is an error to confound elegance with originality. Frank Rich, writing in the *New York Times*, spun Obama's victory in the primaries as something new under the sun, the emergence of an innovator superior to Clinton and McCain, those hoary remnants of the "20th century's old guard." Rich, a lifer in the praetorian cohorts of the Sulzbergers, doubtless knows something about aging phalanxes. But in depicting Obama's candidacy as a novel form of "insurgency" against "the two establishment candidates," he misread the race.

Obama, no less than Clinton and McCain, is the by-product of an established tradition, replete with privileged pedigree. He came to it not by birth and an entry in the *Almanach de Gotha*, but by adoption. He ran a characteristically patrician *cursus honorum*: Columbia University, Harvard Law School, the *Harvard Law Review*, work as a "community organizer" in Chicago seeking (in the words of his website) to "improve living conditions in poor neighborhoods plagued with crime and high unemployment."

The last feat was the test. By forgoing the chance to make money in a big law firm so that (as his website quotes from a *Chicago Reader* piece) he could "continue his battle to organize Chicago's black neighborhoods," Barack conformed to the patrician ethos of Columbia and still more of Harvard, the faith that public service is nobler than working to make a little dough.

THE TRUE HISTORY OF 'NOBLESSE OBLIGE'

Now it is at least arguable that Ivy League grads who work for profit—by delivering products and services and building up businesses that create jobs—have contributed as much to the general welfare as have the grads who "organize" people in the name of social justice or some other cosmic fantasy. But in the world of decaying patriciandom, the public-service grad enjoys a special prestige.

Why? History teaches us to be skeptical of patrician claims that public service is a uniquely beautiful profession. Study the waxing and waning of aristocratic castes, and it is clear that the mandarins have a pretty good idea of just what the rhetoric of community buys them practically.

Power, for one thing. When entrenched privilege finds itself threatened by new and aggressive forms of energetic activity, it typically counters the danger by using the power of the state (disguised into an agency of *noblesse oblige* or social solidarity) to cement an alliance with those at the bottom of the heap. Decaying patrician orders have historically maintained their preeminence by taking the lower depths in hand and giving them the benefit of a (wise and benevolent) paternal superintendence.

Roman patricians beat back the *nouveaux riches* of their day by negotiating a deal with the urban rabble. As a result, the dregs of Rome got bread and circuses, and the patricians retained their grip on the machinery of the *res publica*. When Jacques got out of hand in Bourbon France, the aristocrat who could not bear to surrender his prerogatives to the *jacquerie* turned mob-master; the Duke of Orléans took the name Philippe Égalité and anointed himself prince of the *canaille*. The savvier members of Russia's moribund nobility (among them Bakunin and Kropotkin) took note and embraced communitarian socialism. Bismarck and Disraeli gave the dying patrician classes of, respectively, Prussia and England a new lease on life by experimenting with prototypes of the welfare state. In America, the Roosevelts and the Stevensons followed suit.

This patrician ethos, though it has long since been divorced from particular blood-stocks, lingers in the imagination of those who push paper for a living in Ivy League schools, in the Democratic party, and on the editorial desk of the *New York Times*. Obama speaks for them when he says, in *The Audacity of Hope*, that government must be an expression of "our communal values, our sense of mutual responsibility and social solidarity."

The late Arthur Schlesinger Jr. once opined that the United States vacillates between phases of glittering, communitarian "public purpose," associated with appealing patrician showmen like the Roosevelts, and drab, profit-seeking "private interest" periods presided over by presidents so boring no one remembers their names. Amid his many errors, Schlesinger was right in perceiving that the idea of communitarian public purpose has a glamor, a charm, a way of touching the high-minded, generous instincts of the soul, that the ethos of profit-and-loss will never match, golden-egg-laying goose though it be.

The correlative (and no less valid) point Professor Schlesinger made is that anything, however rational, just, and useful it may be, after a while becomes a bore.

We have now enjoyed, in this country, a quarter of a century of unprecedented prosperity. We have been wallowing in wealth ever since the last and most elaborate fabric of Schlesingerian public power, the Great Society, came crashing down in the dark days of Nixon and Carter. The gloomy

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prophets of the early Reagan years are now living fatly in the Sun Belt. The Jeremiahs of the Nineties are busy collecting egregious dividends. Even the nay-sayers of the Tech Bubble are comfortably retired in moated communities where *châteaux* the size of Grand Trianons spring up as monotonously as the dandelions.

Senator Obama, with his keen sense of the moment, says that enough is enough. Our embarrassment of riches is, well, an embarrassment. Let's go back to the patrician-inspired cult of public power that brought us the 1970s, the Rockefeller Mausoleum known as the city of Albany, the wage and price controls of Nixon, the first forays into the nationalization of medicine under Johnson.

Here is the problem: McCain cannot possibly tilt at so vacuous and noble-seeming a mirage as Obama without appearing an ogre. He could put Hayek's classic statement against neofeudalism, *The Road to Serfdom*, in every mailbox in America (with a bonus copy of *The Constitution of Liberty* to those who checked the box "some college" in their communications with the central authority), and it would do him no good. He could arrange for subliminal messages on the *CBS Evening News* to hypnotize viewers with the mantra, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner," and still lose Florida.

Of course McCain needs to make the obvious arguments. The communitarian tradition leads inexorably to higher taxes, bloated bureaucracies, subsidized sloth. But those arguments won't carry Pennsylvania. The voters of Erie and Pittsburgh have heard them too many times before. The arguments are sound, but to many people they seem stale.

Besides, McCain is not the man to put Calvin Coolidge's axiom—"the business of America is business"—in a fresh and arresting light. First the Navy paid his salary, then his father-in-law, then the Senate. Having never sweated over an income statement, he cannot understand the intense anguish his fellow Republicans feel whenever they see taxes go up and watch that marginal dollar, conjured out of productive enterprise, earmarked for some bureaucratic coffer in the name of communal values, social solidarity, or some other such metaphysical whimsy.

TRUMPET-NOTES OF CHIVALRY

No, if he is to beat Obama, McCain must fight with weapons he knows how to wield. He must convince voters that the tradition that shaped him, a tradition of duty and honor that grows out of a frankly chivalrous conception of the beauty of courage, has more to offer the country than does the patrician ideal Obama discovered at Harvard.

The officer corps is grounded, finally, in a tradition of hierarchy and subordination based on capacity to lead. Its origins and orientation are aristocratic. McCain has the good grace not to deny it. "I am not the son of a coal miner," he told voters in the Appalachian coal-mining town of Inez, Ky., in April. He continued:

> I wasn't raised by a family that made its living from the land or toiled in a mill or worked in the local schools or health clinic. . . . I was raised in the United States Navy, and after my own naval career, I became a politician. My work isn't as hard as yours. I had an easier start in life and an easier time since than many folks in Martin County. . . . But you are my compatriots; my fellow Americans. That shared distinction means more to me than almost any other association.

The man who spoke these words backed them up with deeds. If he continues to talk like this, he will not be rejected lightly by the voters of his country.

Americans, with their democratic traditions, have an aversion to the word "aristocracy," but not to the idea of it, which, in its most innocent and natural form, merely acknowledges what everyone knows to be true—that in any one of the various departments of life, some people are vastly superior to others.

I suspect that many voters might even be persuaded to distinguish between aristocracy's more- and less-salubrious forms. Of the two competing patrician philosophies on the hustings this year, one of them, McCain's, represents the aristocratic ideal in its prime, when the knight aspired to fight the good fight. The other, Obama's, represents the patrician ideal in its decadence, when the novice qualifies for the exercise of public power by dreaming the good communitarian dream.

I doubt whether, when he cites his admiration of Teddy Roosevelt, McCain cares about policies. What rouses him, I suppose, is San Juan Hill, the dash and determination of the cavalier who seeks to crush the foreign foe.

McCain wins if he persuades the nation that he is the embodiment of a tradition of strength that happens to be aristocratic, one that will keep America safe in a world that is as dangerous today as it was in 1776, when Washington stood between the free state and its extinction; in 1860, when Lincoln prepared to save it a second time; in 1940, when Churchill stood up to National Socialism; and during the Cold War, when he rallied the free world a second time, against the Bolsheviks behind the Curtain.

McCain knows (Obama seems not to) that technological advances have given states and factions that appear relatively weak the potential to pose the same threat to our way of life that the earlier forms of servile deviltry did.

Evelyn Waugh, who admired the archaic splendor of the tradition McCain embodies, thought it incapable of appealing to the modern democratic mind, which—in *Brideshead Revisited*—he identified with Hooper:

> Hooper had wept often, but never for Henry's speech on St. Crispin's day, nor for the epitaph at Thermopylae. The history they taught him had had few battles in it but, instead, a profusion of detail about humane legislation and recent industrial change. Gallipoli, Balaclava, Quebec, Lepanto, Bannockburn, Roncevales, and Marathon—these, and the Battle in the West where Arthur fell, and a hundred such names whose trumpet-notes, even now in my sere and lawless state, called to me irresistibly across the intervening years with all the clarity and strength of boyhood, sounded in vain to Hooper.

I'm not sure Waugh was right in this. Those trumpet-notes have the power to enchant even the mass-produced mind of the present. They may save us yet. **NR**

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■ THE STATES

The Sad Philadelphia Story

The City of Brotherly Love shows America how not to deal with a crime wave

KEVIN WILLIAMSON

PHILADELPHIA is famous for two things: cheesesteaks and murder.

It's also well known for being—in Lincoln Steffens's classic phrase—"corrupt and contented." Philadelphia has one of the most backward and incompetent city governments in America, but its problems go beyond public administration. Philadelphia suffers from a combination of failed civic institutions, a deeply embedded racial paranoia that undermines law enforcement, and a local culture that has come to shrug at the urban chaos this produces. Philadelphia stands as a warning to other big American cities: This is how you drown under a crime wave.

In 2006, the one-or-two-a-day-and-a-dozen-on-weekends murder spree that earned "Killadelphia" its rap as an urban abattoir came to what everybody hopes was its guns-blazing peak, leaving 406 people dead. Another 392 were murdered in 2007. By way of comparison, Phoenix, which recently overtook Philadelphia as the nation's fifth-largest city, had 238 murders in 2006. San Antonio, a city nearly Philadelphia's size and sharing many of its economic challenges, had 119 murders. It's clearly not all about poverty: Miami, America's poorest major city, saw 79 homicides in all of 2006. In March 2006, more Americans died violently on the streets of Philadelphia than died fighting in Iraq—and March wasn't the city's worst month of that year.

That Iraq comparison isn't made casually. In an August 2007 *Washington Post* article titled "The War in West Philadelphia," surgeon John P. Pryor described his experience this way: "In the swirl of screams and moving figures, my mind drifted to my recent experience in Iraq as an Army surgeon. There we dealt regularly with 'mascals,' or mass-casualty situations. In Iraq, ironically, I found myself drawing on my experience as a civilian trauma surgeon each time mascals would overrun the combat hospital. As nine or ten patients from a firefight rolled in, I sometimes caught myself saying 'just like another Friday night in West Philadelphia.'"

For the tourist, it must be hard to believe that all this mayhem is happening in the city where schoolchildren go to see the Liberty Bell and Carpenters' Hall. Center City, as Philadelphia's core is called, is vibrant, diverse, affluent, and full of cafés and theaters. Ten-year property-tax abatements encouraged a boom of condo conversions, and new skyscrapers transformed the city's skyline. Ed Rendell, now governor, made attracting new business and investment to Center City the cornerstone of his mayoralty, and he still enjoys the reputation of a minor divinity in the city. But there was a hollowness to Rendell's achievement: Those skyscrapers became home to floors and floors of vacant or underutilized real estate. A wage tax of over 4 percent continued to drive the middle class out of the city and into the suburbs. Small and independent entrepreneurs, when they're not being milked by union thugs, are suffocated under an expensive and complex tax regime. Rendell left Philadelphia with some of the worst public schools in the country, so incompetently run that the state had to take them over in 2001. And Rendell's final kick in the shins was leaving this mess in the hands of America's least competent mayor, John Street, who succeeded him in 2000.

A FAILED CITY GOVERNMENT

The worst of Philadelphia's murder rampage roughly corresponds with the Street years, and it is not difficult to see why. Street's administration was a crime spree in its own right. Though the mayor was never charged with a crime, his inner circle kept prosecutors busy: The city treasurer was sentenced to 10 years in prison on a 27-count federal corruption indictment and took a couple of bankers down with him, and the mayor's consigliere died before facing trial on similar charges. A prominent Muslim leader close to Street was convicted of using his political influence to win financial favors, while the mayor's brother, a hot-dog vendor with no relevant experience to speak of (and fronting a company with no employees), was offered a no-bid, million-dollar contract to provide services at the city's airport.

Politics constantly hobbles the ability of the city's capable police department to address crime. One illustrative episode involves the shooting of a 16-year-old student outside of Strawberry Mansion High School in West Philadelphia. The head of the school district went to the mayor pleading for more police patrols during the immediate after-school hours, which are the most dangerous time of day for students. But the proposal was scotched by Sandra Dungee Glenn, an African-American school-board member and former chief of staff to Rep. Chaka Fattah. Glenn argued that deploying extra police in the area would send the wrong message to students and make them feel "that we need to be armed against them." Mayor Street chimed in that he wouldn't trust "a cop with a Glock" in the schools. So black leaders, along with Philadelphia's black mayor and its black police chief, directed its heavily black police force to leave black students vulnerable to black criminals, for reasons of racial politics. Sandra Dungee Glenn was subsequently named chair of the School Reform Commission. That's Philly.

The problem is that Sandra Dungee Glenn was right. Black neighborhoods in Philadelphia *would* feel under siege if they received the police attention they desperately need. As one Philadelphia cop put it, "I can solve crime in these neighborhoods tomorrow. You put a cop on every street corner. But the neighborhoods will complain and the city won't pay for it."

THE PARANOID STYLE IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLITICS

The careers of mediocrities such as John Street and Sandra

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Dungee Glenn have been made possible by what might be called "the paranoid style in African-American politics," the elevation of racial loyalty over citizenship. The hogwash proffered by Barack Obama's mentor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright—AIDS is a government plot to kill African-Americans, the CIA peddles crack—is pretty mild compared to political discourse in black Philadelphia. Before the 2004 election, one black newspaper warned its readers to flee the city because President Bush was planning to suppress the inner-city vote . . . with nuclear weapons. This paranoid style is deeply embedded in the race-based politics of Philadelphia, and the police catch the worst of it.

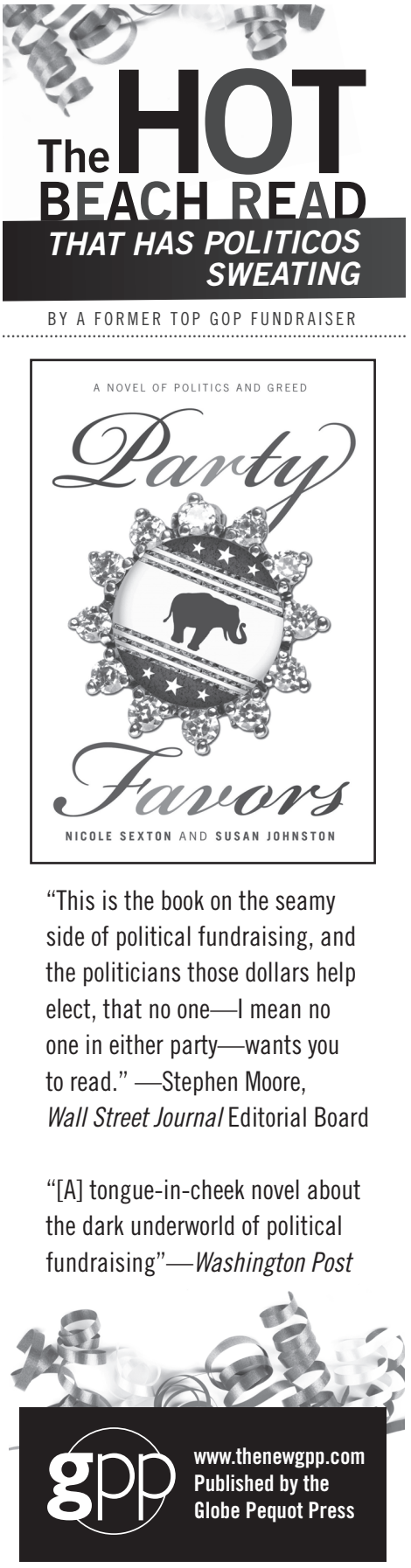
"We have an avid hate for the police," says Michelle Green, a black woman working an overnight shift near the Convention Center. "Black police officers have taken on the role of overseers," she says, smiling at the whip-cracking plantation metaphor. "They are haters of their own race." This attitude is not isolated. "Stop Snitchin'" T-shirts, advertising a philosophy that threatens death to those who cooperate with police—"Snitches get stitches, and get found in ditches"—are a hot item at street kiosks. A former prosecutor reports seeing a woman who planned to give a statement in the murder of her son being physically dragged out of a police car by her neighbors.

But it is precisely in the black neighborhoods that the police are most needed. Nine of Philadelphia's 25 police districts, mostly in black neighborhoods, account for two-thirds of the city's homicides. African-Americans represent about 85 percent of the homicide victims and a similar proportion of the killers.

None of this is lost on Judge Jeffrey Minehart. He was the first judge to preside over the city's special "gun court"; he now spends almost all of his time hearing Philadelphia homicide cases. On the day of our interview he happens to be hearing the case of a convicted drug dealer charged with gun possession. The defendant is acting as his own attorney and he's no Perry Mason. He has to be physically prompted to stand when the judge enters the room. But he's cut a deal: two to four years in lockup and two years of probation. He'll probably do the time in boot camp, and that time will probably be closer to two years than to four. It's a slap on the wrist, but everybody seems pleased with it, except the guilty party. He is disappointed that his sentencing is immediate: "Do we have to do it *now?*" he asks.

This guy isn't the kind of armed felon who makes the news in Philadelphia. On the morning of Not-Perry-Mason's trial, the papers were full of the hunt for all-star fugitive Eric DeShawn Floyd, an armed robber with 17 priors and an appreciation for SKS semiautomatic rifles, one of which he and his crew had just used to murder Philadelphia Police Sgt. Stephen Liczbinski in the aftermath of a botched bank robbery. Three men, disguised as burka-clad Muslim women, were involved in the heist. The Philadelphia *Daily News* carried an info-graphic describing the SKS with the headline: "Should This Gun Be Legal?" There was no *Daily News* headline asking why a felon with 17 entries on his rap sheet was walking abroad in Philadelphia. Should *that* be legal?

It's a question that needs asking, but Philadelphia's news media, clergy, and civic leaders won't start that conversation. Two of the three Philadelphia police officers murdered over the past two years were killed by convicted criminals. Most cop-killers have criminal histories. But the *Daily News*, like the rest of official Philadelphia, has learned the hard way that it's easier to blame remote lawmakers in Harrisburg or Washington than to take an honest look at Philadelphia's criminal realities. In 2002 the *Daily News* ran a front page carrying mug shots of 14 fugitive murderers wanted in Philadelphia and ran pictures of 27 more inside. Two of the fugitives were apprehended soon after their pictures were published, but the newspaper quickly found itself the subject of boycotts and protests because all of the fugitives whose pictures were published were black, Hispanic, or Asian. The *Daily News* didn't racially filter the photos: There simply weren't any white murder fugitives wanted in Philadelphia at that time. But the paper was nonetheless accused of racism, and some of its own staffers joined in the festival of denunciation. In the end, the newspaper knuckled under and apologized


The HOT BEACH READ
THAT HAS POLITICOS SWEATING
BY A FORMER TOP GOP FUNDRAISER
A NOVEL OF POLITICS AND GREED
Party Favors
NICOLE SEXTON AND SUSAN JOHNSTON
"This is the book on the seamy side of political fundraising, and the politicians those dollars help elect, that no one—I mean no one in either party—wants you to read." —Stephen Moore, Wall Street Journal Editorial Board
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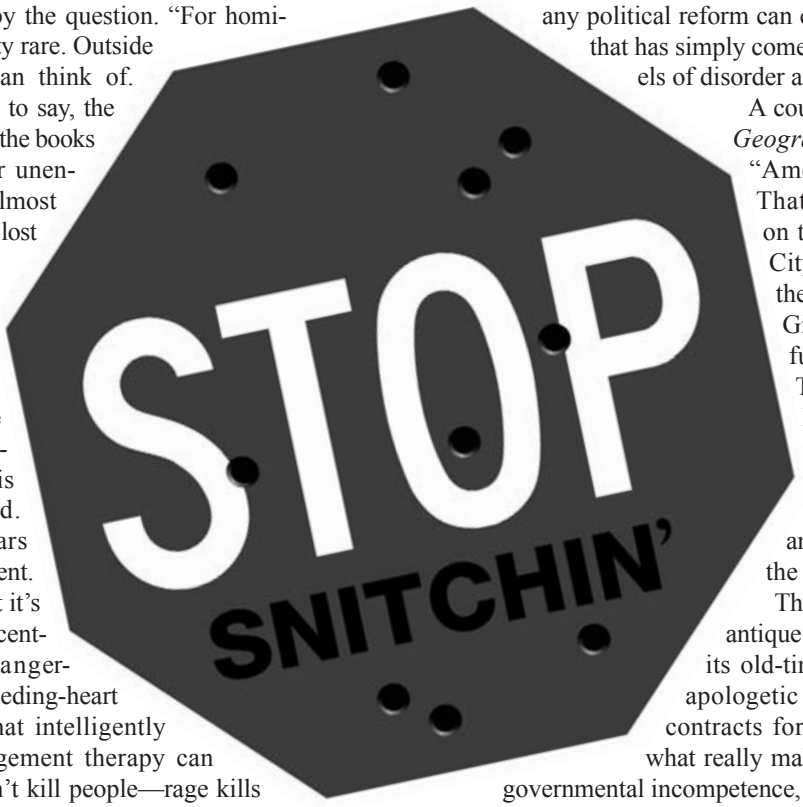
for publishing the truth. Since then, the city's newspapers, like the district attorney, the mayors, and most of official Philadelphia, have found it much safer to blame Philadelphia's bloodshed on distant bogeymen in Congress and rednecks at the NRA. Did I mention that the city government isn't the only failed institution in Philadelphia?

A CULTURE OF CHAOS

Judge Minehart, too, argues for better gun control, but he's quick to admit that it wouldn't have stopped Howard Cain from murdering Sgt. Stephen Liczbinski with a stolen gun. Asked if he's ever seen a legally purchased firearm used in a crime, Judge Minehart looks surprised by the question. "For homicides, sure, though it's pretty rare. Outside of that . . . not that I can think of. Practically none." Which is to say, the gun-control laws already on the books are so poorly enforced, or unenforceable, that they are almost meaningless. This fact is not lost on Judge Minehart.



"Gun control is a piece of the puzzle, I think, but it's only one piece of the puzzle," the judge says. "Drugs are a piece of the puzzle, too, but people overestimate how much of this homicide is drug-related. Corner-fights and turf wars are probably about 30 percent. That's a big piece, sure, but it's not the largest. A strong percentage of these crimes are anger-related." Minehart is no bleeding-heart liberal, but he believes that intelligently administered anger-management therapy can prevent murders. Guns don't kill people—rage kills people.

Judge Minehart also argues that expanding the "gun court" he once presided over could help cut into the crime. Gun-court cases are handled separately from the generality of criminal cases. The probation officers' caseloads are limited, and probationers are drug-tested twice a month. Philadelphia, a city of about 1.5 million, has some 50,000 people on probation. Outside of gun court, the typical Philadelphia probation officer has between 150 and 175 cases, making close monitoring impossible. If those probationers are drug-tested at all, it happens only once every six months.

But official Philadelphia cannot set intelligent priorities, and gun court is hobbled because the city cannot find an extra million or two in its bloated, patronage-packed $4 billion budget. Another program, Operation Safe Streets, put extra police officers on patrol in neighborhoods suffering the worst crime problems. But in true Philly style, the program was staffed through police overtime, which gets very expensive, instead of having its patrols built into regularly budgeted police duties.

The city's new mayor, Michael Nutter, is something different for Philadelphia: a squeaky-clean technocrat with a kind of nerdy anti-charisma. He is more given to low-key problem-solving than to displays of inspiring oratory. He has already taken some baby steps to set a few things right, including pulling 250 police officers from less-pressing duties and putting them on patrol in high-crime areas. But it is far from clear that Nutter can do for Philadelphia what Rudy Giuliani did for New York. Nutter doesn't enjoy the same sort of princely powers that a New York mayor can muster, and there isn't going to be a stock-market boom to carpet Philadelphia with money the way Wall Street rained legal tender on Giuliani-era New York. Philadelphia still has a bull market in murder, and it is far from clear that any political reform can change the culture of a city that has simply come to accept Third World levels of disorder and corruption.

A couple of years ago, *National Geographic* called Philadelphia "America's Next Great City." That motto is already fading on the side of a building near City Hall. Is Philadelphia on the road to recovery, like post-Giuliani New York—or is its future more like Detroit's? The indicators aren't good: Established businesses are fleeing, and they're being replaced by casinos, thanks to the efforts of Ed Rendell and John Street on behalf of the gambling lobby.

There is something strangely antique in Philadelphia's politics—its old-timey union bosses and unapologetic patronage, its sweetheart contracts for the mayor's brother. But what really makes an impression isn't the governmental incompetence, but the blasé acceptance of quotidian chaos on a scale that wouldn't be tolerated in New York, Atlanta, or Houston. Philly is what you get when you combine San Francisco crazy with Trenton's economy. Exhibit A: The raving homeless guy nicknamed Screaming Man, who comes careering out of an alley into ritzy Rittenhouse Row, ranting that he has AIDS and threatening to bite passersby. He screams, threatens, howls, and generally makes an urban spectacle of himself as diners at the nearby sidewalk cafes nibble on $16 Gruyère cheeseburgers and drink espresso. He's been doing this schtick for years and years, without risking intervention from authority of any kind or even really commanding the attention of the rich guys coming out of Holt's Cigars, who just step around him as if he were dog droppings. He's part of the local color, like incompetent mayors and Stop Snitchin' T-shirts, like leaving schoolkids vulnerable to criminals so as not to "send the wrong message." Philadelphia's City Hall, perhaps America's most beautiful municipal building, is crowned with a statue of William Penn. But it might as well be Eric DeShawn Floyd or John Street, Not-Perry-Mason or Screaming Man: This is their city. **NR**

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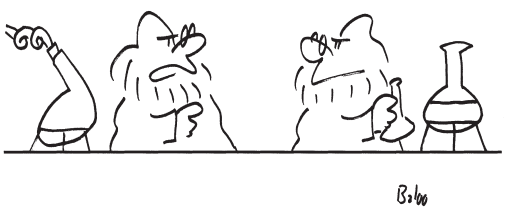
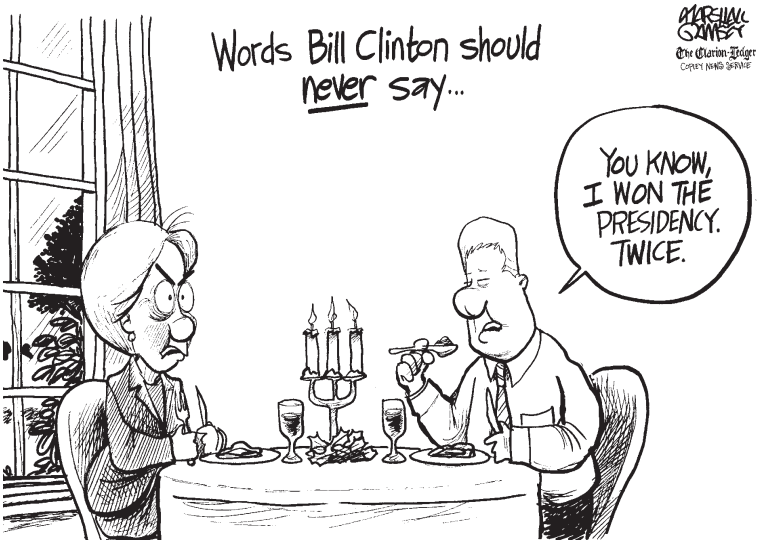
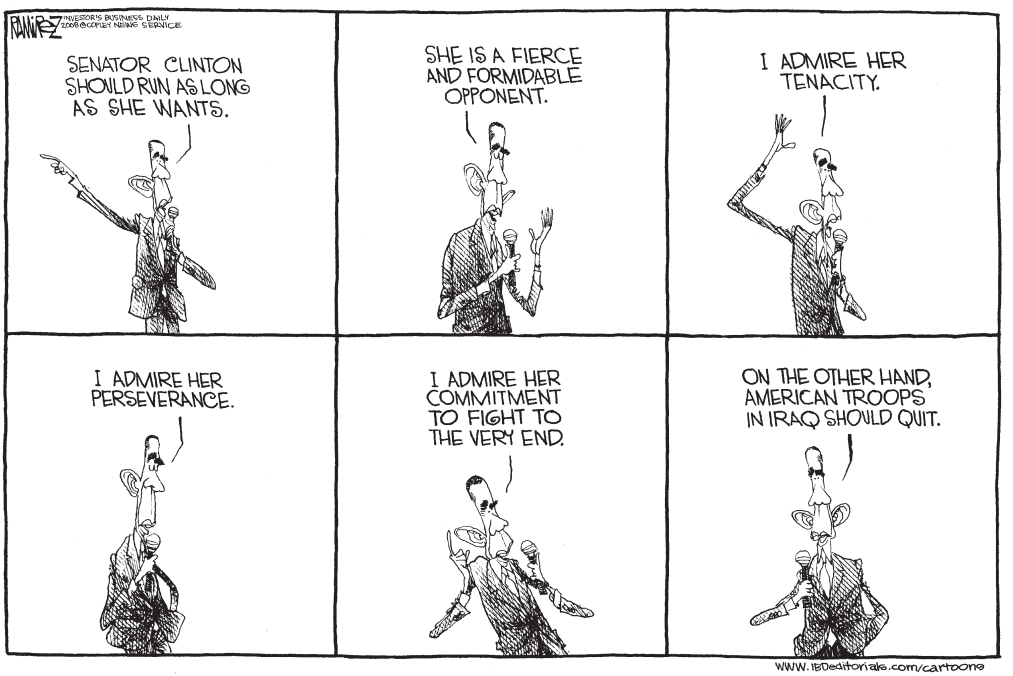
"According to statistics, we bigots are a minority now, so . . ."



"Oh yeah?—Well, I have a theory about you!"


Words Bill Clinton should never say...
YOU KNOW, I WON THE PRESIDENCY. TWICE.
MARSHALL QUIMBY
The Clarion-Ledger
COPLEY NEWS SERVICE


RAMIREZ
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SENATOR CLINTON SHOULD RUN AS LONG AS SHE WANTS.
SHE IS A FIERCE AND FORMIDABLE OPPONENT.
I ADMIRE HER TENACITY.
I ADMIRE HER PERSEVERANCE.
I ADMIRE HER COMMITMENT TO FIGHT TO THE VERY END.
ON THE OTHER HAND, AMERICAN TROOPS IN IRAQ SHOULD QUIT.
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ROB LONG

Bethesda Mental Health Clinic

Therapist's Notes

First Session:

Patient arrives in an agitated and slightly irritated state. She insists that she barely has time for a preliminary interview, as her duties as the Democratic party presidential nominee require almost constant activity. "I've got no time for head shrinking," she says merrily, "I'm going to be the next president of the United States."

Therapist remains non-responsive to this statement, and instead begins asking simple intake questions, designed to put the patient at ease. The patient refuses to answer most of them, citing the presence of the Secret Service detail.

When reminded that there isn't, in fact, a Secret Service detail either in the treatment room, or outside in the waiting area, the patient's eyes dart around furiously. Her face sets itself into a stony glare. "Are you f*****g kidding me?" she barks. "You can't f*****g see them?" She points to several empty spaces in her vicinity. "There's Steve," she says. "Steve joined us when we won Iowa." She points to the small indoor ficus. "And there's Malcolm. He's African-American. And guess what? He voted for me!"

In non-confrontational tones, the therapist reiterates that he and the patient are alone in the room, that the room is a "safe space," that it's understandable to be disappointed and disoriented following an unexpected and traumatic event. The patient snaps at him: "Doctor, may I remind you that the presidential nominee of a major party gets a massive Secret Service security detail."

When gently reminded that she did not, in fact, achieve that status, and that the senator from Illinois, Barack Obama, did, the patient begins to laugh uncontrollably in a loud and braying matter.

This continues for the duration of the 55-minute session.

Patient is clearly suffering from anxiety and related disorders, especially depersonalization disorder and schizotypal behaviors, evidenced by extreme "magical thinking." Suggest Lexapro for anxiety, followed by a trial course of Risperdal and/or any powerful dopamine receptor blockades. Clozaril? Abilify?

Second Session:

Patient arrives in a serene state. The anti-anxiety medication is clearly having an effect. Her personal behavior and demeanor are no longer manic, and although her eyes are glassy and her lower lip droops (a side effect of the Thorazine) she seems to be clearly aware of her surroundings and can easily spell her full name.

Optimistic that the medication is working, the therapist begins to engage her in pleasant, non-substantive conversation about general topics. She talks pleasantly and fluidly about the weather, the décor of the room, and her preference for tea over coffee.

Feeling confident, the therapist brings up the topic of national politics. The patient sighs. She announces that she is working on her inauguration speech, and is trying to set the right tone for the country. She wants to be inclusive. "It was a tough election," she says, "And John McCain fought hard. But in the end, as I knew they would, the American people elected me their president and leader and most popular person ever, and when they place that golden, shimmering crown on my head and the pillar of purifying flame shoots out from my eyes, well, I just want my speech to be something people remember."

Clearly, the medication is not working. Replace Thorazine and Risperdal with Zyprexa (double dose) and Seroquel.

Third Session:

Patient arrives under heavy medication. Blockading the D2 receptors has had a positive effect, though patient has gained weight as a side effect.

Patient is wheeled in to the treatment room by her husband and his female companion, who seems to the therapist to be an unsympathetic care-giver. Patient's husband informs the therapist that for the past six days, the patient has oscillated between deep, untroubled sleep (a side effect of the Lexapro?) and agitated wakefulness. For three hours the previous day, the patient apparently attempted to declare war on Iran by shouting at the toaster. Earlier this morning she attempted to enact national health insurance via wrapping her head in aluminum foil. She also nominated a squirrel from the back yard to the Supreme Court.

Patient's husband is quite insistent that the patient be given more powerful sedatives, as her unpredictable waking times interfere with his social activities. Therapist promises to take this under advisement.

Throughout the rest of the session, patient naps peacefully, only occasionally waking to order an immediate rise in the top tax rate.

Slowly reduce anti-psychotic medication over the next ten days to reintroduce patient to reality.

Final Session:

In preparation for this session, the therapist stocks both the waiting area and the coffee table in the treatment room with various news magazines and newspapers, all clearly depicting Sen. Barack Obama and identifying him as the presidential nominee of the Democratic party. Fanned out on every possible flat surface are clippings and photographs that reinforce this crucial fact.

When the patient arrives and notices these items, she immediately stabs therapist in the eye with a pencil.

Recommendation: heavy restraint and/or hospitalization.

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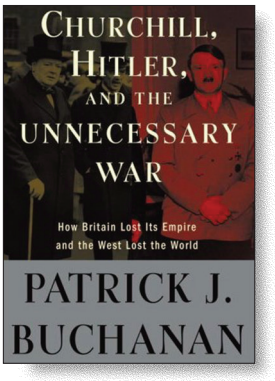
Sorry, No



Churchill, Hitler, and the Unnecessary War: How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World, by Patrick J. Buchanan (Crown, 544 pp., $29.95)

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

Patrick J. Buchanan is evidently an unhappy and angry man. He wants to bang the table, and shout that the West and its Christian civilization are over and done with. And this did not happen through any consequential process of evolution and change. No, indeed. Loss and decay are directly attributable to the wretched politicians, so-called statesmen, who have led us astray for the past hundred years. And the most wretched of all these is—wait for it—Winston Churchill.

Churchill was at the forefront of British public life for about 60 years, at one time or another holding all the great offices of state. As might be expected, his judgments were often at fault, sometimes grievously, as when he broke a miners' strike with force or agreed to the 1922 partition of Transjordan. Although Buchanan does not mention these specific incidents, or others of the same kind on the home front, for the first 200 or so pages of this diatribe he does his level best to blacken Churchill in the context of foreign affairs—as a warmonger in 1914; vindictive towards Germany over the Treaty of Versailles; wrong over the size and role of the British navy; blind to the need to keep Japan and Italy as allies; dangerous in advocating war when Hitler invaded the Rhineland; and finally complicit in the guarantee actually given in March 1939 by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain that if Poland were attacked Britain would go to war in its defense. For Buchanan, this guarantee was the blunder of all blunders, from which came nothing but disaster.

In the 1930s, democracy everywhere was imploding under the challenge posed by Hitler and Nazism. Churchill was the one contemporary statesman who spelled out the reality that a totalitarian future was engulfing the world. Becoming prime minister at a moment when Hitler had won seemingly irreversible military victories, Churchill committed Britain to fight Nazism to the death. The general public in the Anglosphere and far beyond has long held that even if resistance to Nazism was a gamble for the highest stakes, Churchill was right to take it. Whatever mistakes he may have made over other, lesser issues, this determination to destroy Hitler earned him an honored place in history.

Buchanan will have none of that. If Churchill was the great man he is reputed to be in this popular characterization, so it seems to Buchanan, his was the kind of greatness that did untold and everlasting damage. Buchanan makes the particularly grave charges that defiance of Hitler quite pointlessly cost millions of lives, put paid to the British Empire, and condemned half of Europe to live under Communism for some 40 ghastly years. These horrors all stemmed from adventures abroad that a real statesman would have perceived were not in the national interest.

Buchanan seems never to have heard of the all-important Law of Unintended Consequences that governs so much human endeavor and complicates judgment. As often as not, and unpredictably as well, decisions that are right and justified nonetheless may have harmful and unjustified outcomes. This is the case here. The surrender of half of Europe to Stalinism turned out unexpectedly to be part of the price that had to be paid to keep the other half free. In a further unexpected consequence, possession of that conquered bloc eventually helped to destroy Communism from within.

Hitler and Stalin are directly responsible for the crimes committed in their names. To shift onto Churchill the ultimate responsibility for the crimes of others is to confuse the agent and the victim, and further draws a wholly misleading moral equivalence between totalitarian aggression and democratic self-defense.

Much of Buchanan's mystification depends either on deprecating or exaggerating the role of the individual in history, according to whatever polemical point he is out to make. In the first instance, then, he fails to credit the willpower and imagination shown by Churchill on taking office as prime minister in May 1940. Without Churchill, the British elite might well have chosen a course that betrayed the nation and forfeited its independence. After the Dunkirk debacle, his own foreign minister, Lord Halifax, was recommending an approach via the Italians to discover what terms Hitler might offer. Many prominent people—including dukes and other aristocrats, and senior civil servants—were forming a peace party. More threatening still, a quisling-type regime under the former King Edward VIII, now Duke of Windsor, and the British Union of Fascists, led by Oswald Mosley, was waiting in the wings. If this peace party had prevailed, Nazism might then have been established indefinitely, and the suffering would have been that much the greater.

Hitler duly made a peace offer. Germany was to have sole control of the continent of Europe, with the power to redraw boundaries, and the British were to retain their empire. Confident that they were speaking as representatives of one master race to another, Hitler and his propagandist Goebbels assumed the British would surely appreciate that this proposed division of the spoils was in their interest. They could not understand that Churchill saw Nazism as an absolute evil with which there could be no compromise. Churchill's flat rejection surprised and then infuriated them. Churchill, they declared and may even have believed, was nothing but a warmonger who thus brought destruction on his country and its empire, a fate which they themselves claimed to regret.

In addition to echoing Hitler and Goebbels with astonishing faithfulness,

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Sat./Nov. 8	Ft. Lauderdale, FL		5:00PM	evening cocktail reception
Sun./Nov. 9	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
Mon./Nov. 10	Providenciales, Turks & Caicos	7:00 AM	3:00PM	afternoon seminar late-night smoker
Tue./Nov. 11	San Juan, Puerto Rico	10:00AM	11:00PM	
Wed./Nov. 12	St. Thomas, USVI	8:00AM	5:00PM	evening cocktail reception
Thu./Nov. 13	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars late-night smoker
Fri./Nov. 14	Half Moon Cay	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
Sat./Nov. 15	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	7:00AM		

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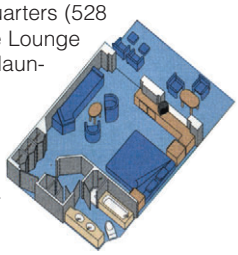
DELUXE SUITE Magnificent luxury quarters (528 sq. ft.) features use of exclusive Neptune Lounge and personal concierge, complimentary laundry, pressing and dry-cleaning service. Large private verandah, king-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), whirlpool bath/shower, dressing room, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, and refrigerator.

SOLD OUT!



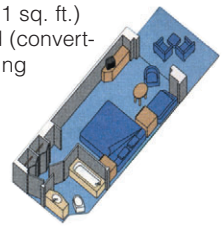
Category SA
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 4,513 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 8,013

SUPERIOR SUITE Grand stateroom (392 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, and much more.

SOLD OUT!

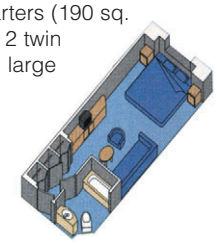
Category SS
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 3,513 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 6,013

DELUXE OUTSIDE Spacious cabin (241 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bath with shower, sitting area, mini-bar, tv, refrigerator, and floor-to-ceiling windows.



Categories VA / VB / VC
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,913 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 4,413

LARGE OCEAN VIEW Comfortable quarters (190 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bathtub with shower, sitting area, tv, large ocean-view windows.



Category D
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,413 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 3,313

LARGE INSIDE Cozy but ample cabin quarters (185 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bathtub with shower, sitting area, tv.

Category K
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 1,813 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,513

mentary than from the likes of **Mark Steyn**, **Christopher Buckley**, **Rob Long**, **Scott Johnson**, or **Deroy Murdock**? Toss media expert **Brent Bozell**, Arizona state policy maven **Darcy Olsen**, and Acton Institute chief **Fr. Robert Sirico** into the fray, and you have a sterling cast to review the ever-leftward tilt of the Fourth Estate and state government.

✔ And they'll be joined in all the elucidating and analyzing of the 2008 elections by *NR*'s editorial heavyweights, including **Jonah Goldberg**, **Kathryn Jean Lopez**, **Kate O'Beirne**, **Ramesh Ponnuru**, **Jay Nordlinger**, and **John Miller**.

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Buchanan supposes that their promises should have been trusted. But once they were undisputed rulers of a Nazi Europe the balance of power would have been in their favor, creating the temptation to subjugate Britain as well.

If the loss of the empire was also included in the price of victory over Nazism, the British people have proved these past 50 years that they were willing to pay it. What was famously acquired in a fit of absent-mindedness was given up without regret or even nostalgia. War or no war, the British Empire could not have survived the 20th century. The Treasury had always begrudged the expense of it; the armed forces resented the dispersal of resources. Bernard Shaw, J. A. Hobson and the Marxists, Fabians and influential socialist professors such as N. H. Brailsford and R. H. Tawney and G. D. H. Cole, the Bloomsbury coterie, the universities, even the patriotic Orwell formed a chorus passionately turning public opinion against colonialism and imperialism. The Boers, Gandhi and the Indian Congress, Zaghlul Pasha and the Egyptian nationalists, had learnt from their English peers to launch protest movements. They had only to mobilize mobs on the streets in the name of nationalism, and self-rule would be theirs. In this second instance, Churchill was in the grip of historic forces far too powerful to be at the command of any individual, even, or perhaps especially, one as imperialist as he.

To mount this attack on Churchill, Buchanan employs a strange technique all his own of making some statement and backing it up by one or more quotations from a secondary source, as though reliance on others must prove that he is in the right. Some pages carry three or four such quotations, almost in the manner of an anthology. The huge majority of these sources, needless to say, are British writers with axes to grind, and some of them are crackpots or closet admirers of Nazism. A. J. P. Taylor, for one, seems to have been a major influence on Buchanan; Taylor was the first to put forward the demonstrably silly proposition that Hitler was a politician like any other, and a reasonable man who could have been accommodated by other reasonable men.

As the book unfolds, the puzzled reader is driven to ask himself more and more insistently what Buchanan's intention is. What is the point of trying to twist Churchill's wartime role inside out? Does he seriously believe there is no such thing as a just war? He can't want to denigrate democracy, can he? Nor can he really want to rehabilitate Hitler, can he? He can't think Stalin might have been a sincere ally, can he? Whatever is an American doing bewailing the end of the British Empire and criticizing his own country for picking up as many of the pieces as possible? Why the superficiality of the argument? Why the aggressively politicized tone?

After hundreds of pages, the final sentence of the book suddenly illuminates these questions: "And to show the world he means business, President Bush has had placed in his Oval Office a bust of Winston Churchill." So here's another wretched so-called statesman repeating old mistakes by setting off in search of adventures abroad that are not in the national interest, indeed unnecessary. So Churchill had to be knocked down in order to scotch any notion that President Bush in his foreign policy might have been following a good and brave example.

Oh well. **NR**

Way to Take Charge

George Washington on Leadership, by Richard Brookhiser (Basic, 269 pp., $26)

SARAH BRAMWELL

Richard Brookhiser begins his latest book jarringly: "America's greatest leader was its first—George Washington. He ran two start-ups, the army and the presidency, and chaired the most important committee meeting in history, the Constitutional Convention." Readers accustomed to more gallant portrayals of our greatest Founding Father may be startled by this opening volley, which owes more to Peter Drucker than to Parson Weems.

Can it be that the exalted hero of Valley Forge and father of our country is a suitable model for getting and spending

Sarah Bramwell is a writer living in New York.

SHE WRESTLED WITH ABRAHAM'S ANGEL

She wrestled with Abraham's angel out on the road
and in the fields and late at night in bed.
She guessed it was his by what was asked of her.

And when the scourge came, and then the loneliness,
when everybody turned away to go—
she knew that Job was in her bloodline, too.

And Rabbi Loew must have been her master.
Who else could breathe life into her swollen feet
and keep them plodding as the Golem's did,

from dawn to dusk, dusk to dawn, day after day
until she fell down dead, her labors ending
on Labor Day, 1986,

a short ride from the synagogue in the old quarter
where no marker marks her grave, nor the Golem's either,
yet both obeyed the law from dusk to dusk.

—OLIVIA ELLIS SIMPSON

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in the 21st century? Sustaining the conceit of "George Washington, Founding CEO" over a whole book would be a challenge for any writer. But NR senior editor Richard Brookhiser brings just enough of his characteristic gentle irony to make *George Washington on Leadership* work.

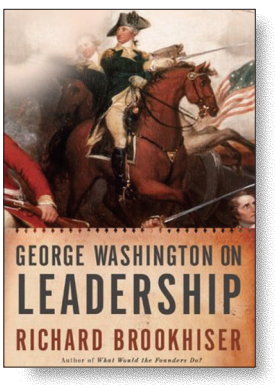
Brookhiser knows that you can't really learn leadership from a book. He quotes the always-trenchant Gouverneur Morris on the subject: "None know how to govern but those who have been used to it and such men have rarely either time or inclination to write about it. The books, therefore, which are to be met with [on the subject] contain mere utopian ideas." In other words, paraphrases Brookhiser, "books on leadership are good for nothing."

Leadership, of course, is one of those nebulous subjects for which there is no science, only fine words. Yet the impossibility of writing a leadership instruction manual has not stopped anyone—from Machiavelli to Rudolph Giuliani—from trying. Indeed, leadership's very elusiveness not only fails to daunt ambitious writers but makes it all the more attractive to them. And as the bestseller lists testify, the public does not share Gouverneur Morris's skepticism.

Nor, ultimately, does Brookhiser. He reminds us that Washington himself was not born great. How did he achieve so much? In part, he learned from experience. But he also learned, Brookhiser argues, from the examples of great men in the past, such as Caesar and Seneca. He even committed maxims of everyday behavior to memory. A Gouverneur Morris might pooh-pooh the idea that models and maxims are what made Washington who he was. Nevertheless, by meditating on them, Washington came to understand the problems of leadership better than most men, even if, like all leaders, he ended up having to improvise.

For example, the challenges he faced as a young officer during the French and Indian War—"fatigues, murmurings, mutinies, and defections"—could come as no surprise to a reader of Caesar's *Commentaries*. And "from Seneca," writes Brookhiser, "Washington would have learned contempt for difficulty. . . . Seneca knew that life was full of difficulties, and impossibilities. But he argued that even when a man could not control them, he could control his reactions to them; he could choose not to whine, or fret, or do evil." If a young Washington learned important leadership lessons from men of the past (an education that continued throughout his life, for he was an avid reader of history), surely we can learn from him.

Washington established himself as a leader of men in ways large and small. Most people know of Washington's bravery in battle, his quelling of mutinous officers at Newburgh, and other leaderly masterstrokes. In this book, Brookhiser dwells on many less monumental but equally valuable examples of his superior management of men and events.



To wit: latrines. His first General Orders, upon taking command of the colonial army, addressed vitally important, if mundane, details. In addition to the normal requests for an accounting of all supplies and rules for keeping order in camp, Washington paid particular attention to the issue of latrines. An experienced military man, he understood that not only the health but the morale of soldiers in the field depended on a few very simple things. So it is not remarkable that the supreme commander of colonial forces would mention latrines once. What is remarkable is that Washington—responsible though he was for creating and executing grand strategy for a disunited and rebellious confederacy of states with 1,200 miles of coastline—never dropped the subject or left it wholly to the attention of lower officers. In 1779, Washington was still harping on latrines: "The Commander-in-Chief, as the hot season approaches, expects . . . vaults to be properly dug . . . and sentries placed to see that the men make use of them only." Brookhiser draws an important leadership lesson from this: No issue is too trivial or too quotidian to command the attention of the man in charge.

Brookhiser also derives important lessons from Washington's management of men. No leader can be effective without harnessing the talents and controlling the flaws of the people he manages. Washington had the advantage of a deep bench from which to draw; revolutionary times had brought out the best in an already ambitious and talented populace. But the Founders—a fractious and brilliant bunch as notorious for their internal rivalries as they are famous for their sound statesmanship—provided Washington with serious personnel challenges.

The most obvious example, of course, was Alexander Hamilton, a brilliant and energetic man with a merchant's eye for balance sheets and a banker's nose for macroeconomics. Hamilton came with serious flaws: He was prideful, obstinate, combative, and capable of gargantuan pettiness—and he was also of dubious parentage (he was a bastard from—*shiver*—the West Indies). Washington, hailing as he did from the most aristocratic and elegant class in the colonies, might easily have sided with those who opposed Hamilton. These men—James Madison is a good example—feared the ascendancy of a new class of elite bankers and merchants should Hamilton's treasury policies take effect. But Washington did not share this instinctive suspicion of Hamilton. He recognized the man's genius, saw past his less attractive qualities, and kept him where his country needed him. History shows that that was the right thing to do, but it cost Washington the friendship and considerable talents of James Madison.

And then there was the challenge of what Brookhiser calls "weird people"—a challenge every executive faces, as smart men tend often to be odd men. General Washington discovered this as he searched for experienced officers for the colonial army. Take, for instance, the flamboyant and irascible Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben. Although Steuben's immense contribution in the Revolutionary War speaks for itself—he whipped the colonial army into shape as only a Prussian could and ably advised Washington throughout the war in military strategy—Brookhiser shows how it took a clear-sighted general to see through the "cloud of oddity" to hire him in the first place. Brookhiser puts the

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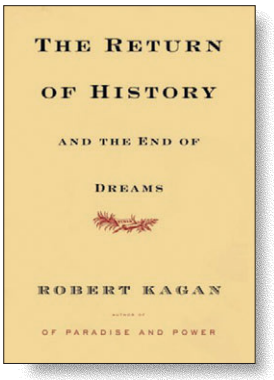
reader in Washington's shoes as he considers whether to bring Steuben on board: "[Steuben] says he is a baron (many Europeans acquire titles in mid-Atlantic). He has served in the army of Frederick the Great, an excellent credential. He is fluent in German and French; unfortunately, he speaks no English, so his orders, and his curses, have to be translated by aides. Two years after he arrives, Washington gets a letter charging that [Steuben] is a pedophile." Washington ignored Steuben's odd, blustery personality, his foreignness, and later the unsubstantiated rumors of homosexuality and pedophilia. He had found his man—and the result was a stronger revolutionary army.

Brookhiser is at his best when he is relating interesting anecdotes and enlivening the biography of a great man, rather than dispensing advice for today's CEOs. Still, Washington's leadership lessons are hardly trivial. Yes, he was a general, and a statesman, and a man of paramount virtue; but he was also a shrewd businessman. Drawing out the qualities that made him a successful manager of men, money, and events can only add to our understanding of him.

More than anything, the book reinforces how truly remarkable George Washington was. He bore with equal grace the drama of battle and the agonizing tedium of committee meetings. Can you think of any other man, now or in the past, who has served for so long and in so many different capacities, and yet concluded each role with even greater respect and love from superiors as well as subordinates than he started with?

And yet, George Washington has never thrilled us quite so much as other, more swashbuckling Great Men of History. Blessed with titanic moderation and awesome good sense—and lacking vices to balance these virtues—Washington avoided missing the mark, falling from grace, and the other vicissitudes and pitfalls of which history is made. It is precisely this fact that makes him an apt subject for a book on leadership. In Richard Brookhiser's hands, Washington remains as glorious as ever—and if some of that glory brushes off on us lowly readers, all the better. **NR**

The Next Wars



The Return of History and the End of Dreams, by Robert Kagan (Knopf, 128 pp., $19.95)

JOHN FONTE

Robert Kagan has produced a brief and lucid book on world politics in the 21st century, a well-written manifesto clearly aimed at influencing U.S. foreign policy. (It features blurbs from John McCain, Joseph Lieberman, and Richard Holbrooke.) Some conservatives will, no doubt, be attracted by Kagan's clarity; his robust distinctions between democrats and autocrats; and his realistic recognition of the limits of negotiations with bad guys—all presented in limpid prose, making it a delight to read. Nevertheless, as we shall see, conservatives should be wary of internalizing Kagan's core narrative as a way to understand America's role in the world, past, present, and future.

In general, Kagan posits three overlapping conflicts that will face world politics: first, a return of international competition ("for status and influence") among great powers "with Russia, China, Europe, Japan, India, Iran, the United States, and others vying for regional predominance"; second, the reemergence of the "old competition between liberalism and autocracy"; and third, the re-eruption of "an even older struggle" between the forces of radical Islam and modern secular regimes and cultures.

Mr. Fonte is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. His forthcoming book, *Sovereignty or Submission: Will Americans Rule Themselves or Be Ruled by Others?* will be published by Encounter Books in 2009.

Kagan begins with the premise that Francis Fukuyama's original 1989 thesis of the "end of history"—that in the future there will be "no serious ideological competitors" to liberal democracy—is outdated. This is so, Kagan tells us, because "autocracy" in the form of China and Russia is "making a comeback" and is now challenging liberal democracy ideologically as well as materially. Moreover, the autocrats in Beijing and Moscow are not simply opportunists, but believe autocracy is good for their nations. Although, unlike the Communists of old, they are not seeking to export their ideology to the West, they could, Kagan insists, provide a model of successful autocratic rule that could be emulated by developing countries.

Kagan rightfully decries the smug "ideological and economic determinism" of the early post–Cold War years. Ideological determinism insisted that "history moves in only one direction," toward human progress. Economic determinism posited that economic growth and material wealth must lead to political freedom and peaceful intentions toward other states. Kagan notes that these predictions have not been borne out (at least so far) in the case of China and Russia. Nor, for that matter, were they borne out in the cases of the Kaiser's Germany, Hitler's Germany, or—as Hamilton explained in *Federalist* No. 6—various other economic powerhouses throughout human history.

Kagan declares that China and Russia have developed a new model. They have shown that it is possible to achieve economic progress, be involved in the global economy, and, at the same time, remain undemocratic and often uncooperative with the West. Moreover, Beijing and Moscow are enabling the radical Islamist regime in Tehran, the anti-democratic government in Damascus, the terrorists of Hezbollah, and anti-democrats elsewhere.

Radical Islamists, Kagan states, can create "horrendous damage," but they cannot achieve their goal of sweeping "infidel accretions" from the Islamic world—they "cannot win." Therefore, Kagan believes, radical Islam "may ultimately have less

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impact on international affairs than [will] the struggle among great powers and between the forces of democracy and autocracy." Nonetheless, a concerted effort among the great powers to deal with radical Islam is unlikely to work because China and Russia will use the Iranian regime, Syria, and Hezbollah to gain geopolitical advantage against the United States.

Kagan's description of the three conflicts of world politics that will "combine and collide" in the 21st century—great-power rivalries, ideological tensions between autocracy and democracy, and the violent challenge of radical Islam—contains some important truths. A crucial fourth conflict, however, is missing. This conflict, which will likewise "combine and collide" with the other three, is the struggle between the forces of transnational global governance and the liberal-democratic nation-state.

Ideologically, Kagan envisions a contemporary bipolar world with Western democracy locked in conflict with "Eastern" autocracy. This struggle between liberalism and autocracy has continued steadily since the late-18th-century Enlightenment. It has resumed in recent years with the rise of autocratic China and Russia, and thus "history" or ideological conflict has returned. The Enlightenment project promoted modernity, secularism, liberalism, and democracy and was resisted by the autocratic, reactionary powers of Europe that sought (in Kagan's words) the "maintenance of a monarchical and aristocratic order against the liberal and radical challenges presented by the French and American revolutions." The United States, Kagan tells us, has been on the secular, liberal, Enlightenment side of this conflict since its beginnings.

But this portrayal of the ideological conflict is misleading in terms of both contemporary world politics and American history. In today's world, Western progressives (who are "transnational progressives") have launched—in the name of utopian schemes of "global governance"—a sustained attack on the ideas of national democratic sovereignty, constitutional supremacy, and democratic majoritarianism within the nation-state. So much should be clear from skimming the *Harvard Law Review* or *Foreign Affairs*. Western transnational progressives advocate international law and supranational institutions (e.g., the International Criminal Court) that supersede the authority of liberal-democratic nation-states.

The elites of the European Union are at the center of the ideological campaign that denigrates the sovereign democratic nation-state and promotes transnational authority. Former U.N. ambassador John Bolton's memoir, *Surrender Is Not an Option*, nicely captures his battles with the "EU-crats" over both practical politics and democratic ideas. At the same time, American universities and law schools are, in the main, closer to the Euro-transnational view than to the pro-national-sovereignty stance of the American center-Right. Kagan is intimately familiar with U.S.-European tensions—he wrote a book (*Of Paradise and Power*) on the subject—but he chooses in this new volume to ignore the conflict within America (and within Europe) between adherents of global governance and supporters of democratic national sovereignty.

Kagan could well be right that "global competition between democratic and autocratic governments will become a dominant feature of the 21st-century world." At the same time, however, the conflict between the forces of global governance and the nation-state will surely intensify. In American terms, this means a battle for supremacy between international law and the U.S. Constitution. Thus, we will witness not simply a conflict between a democratic West and an anti-democratic "East," but a conflict within the West as well, between a democratic and a post-democratic West. As Mark Plattner, vice president of the National Endowment for Democracy, wrote in his recent book, *Democracy Without Borders?*: "We cannot enjoy liberal democracy outside of the framework of the nation-state."

Kagan's view of the 21st century is incomplete because his view of the 18th century is oversimplified. He speaks of "the" Enlightenment, yet, as many conservative thinkers—including Gertrude Himmelfarb in *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French, and American Enlightenments*—have pointed out, there is more than one "Enlightenment." The moderate Anglo-Scottish Enlightenment differed considerably from the more radical, utopian, and anti-Christian French Enlightenment of the philosophes. If the French Revolution was the child of the French Enlightenment, the American Revolution was more the product of the

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Anglo-Scottish Enlightenment and of Continental moderates like Montesquieu.

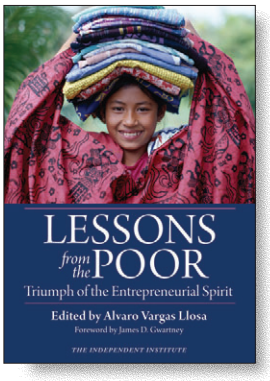
By portraying the 18th century through a bipolar framework (secular-liberal Enlightenment vs. autocracy), with America firmly on the liberal side, Kagan misinterprets the foreign policy and ideology of the early Republic. As heirs to the moderate Enlightenment, American leaders (including Washington, Adams, Hamilton, and Jay) opposed the radical-utopian Enlightenment (Adams debated Condorcet) and the French revolutionary government (we had a naval quasi-war with France). The American Federalists were especially offended by the French radicals' hostility to Christianity.

In the 18th century, as will be the case in the future, the ideological conflict was not bipolar, but tripolar. That is to say, it was not (and will not be) simply "democrats vs. autocrats" (as Kagan would have it), but American constitutional democrats battling both autocrats (Chinese authoritarians, radical Islamists) and radical utopians (whether supporters of the French Revolution in the past or of global governance in the future).

Kagan states that "the present American-dominated order may be inferior" to "a more perfect international liberal order in which nations are more equal, more liberal, more democratic, more committed to peace, and more obedient to the dictates of international rules and norms." But, he notes, there is currently no realistic alternative to American leadership of the world system.

Kagan is a liberal hawk. Conservatives are not so much concerned with nations' being "more obedient to the dictates of international rules and norms"; they are suspicious of the global elites who develop those "rules and norms" and who claim to speak for "world opinion." Clearly, Kagan has written a liberal-hawk manifesto in the hard Wilsonian tradition—"the Enlightenment in arms." This is a respectable pedigree that is often allied to conservatism, but it is not conservative. A conservative foreign-policy vision would (as Reagan did) temper Wilsonianism with a Jacksonian emphasis on American sovereignty, a Hamiltonian concern for our concrete national interests, and a moral stance more in keeping with America's unique religiousness, rather than accommodate the militant and utopian secularism of European and transnational progressive elites. **NR**

How to Kill Poverty



Lessons from the Poor: Triumph of the Entrepreneurial Spirit, edited by Alvaro Vargas Llosa (Independent Institute, 304 pp., $16.95)

JAY NORDLINGER

For years, socialists and collectivists held a monopoly on discussion of how to help the Third World poor. But lately the advocates of an open economy have made inroads. There are reasons for this: Socialism has been proven a failure, and an open economy works.

Is that too blunt, or pat? The facts argue, "Not really."

Of interest is a new book from the Independent Institute, which is a think tank in Oakland, Calif. The book is edited by one of the organization's stars, Alvaro Vargas Llosa. He is the son of the writer Mario, who once ran for president of Peru. Alvaro is a liberal economist and social critic—and by liberal, I mean classical-liberal. He wrote a book called "Liberty for Latin America: How to Undo Five Hundred Years of State Oppression."

In Latin America, the socialists have the upper hand, politically. But that region has given us more than its fair share of excellent liberal thinkers. If for Hernando de Soto alone, the region would have given us more than its fair share of such thinkers.

The new volume bears an intriguing title: "Lessons from the Poor." It is largely case studies from the world over—or rather from Latin America and Africa. Surrounding the case studies are essays, starting with a foreword by James D. Gwartney, who is an econ prof at Florida State. He says, "Entrepreneurship as a source of economic growth and as a weapon against poverty is underappreciated"—there is a great understatement. He further says, "Innovative thinking and alertness to opportunity is present in all societies. Indeed, it is often found in unusual places." Yes, every society is stocked with Horatio Alger figures, or those who would be, if given half a chance. The world lacks for opportunities, not ability.

Reflecting on the case studies in this book, Gwartney says, "No central planner or development official would have chosen any of these people or business options as a tool to reduce poverty. Nonetheless, . . . all of these entrepreneurial activities have substantially upgraded the lives of millions of poor people."

What were the roadblocks placed in the way of our model entrepreneurs? There were many, and Gwartney lists a few: "confiscation of property, pollution of the currency, bureaucratic corruption and inefficiency, excessive taxation, and unnecessary regulation." And he makes a crucial distinction: between genuine entrepreneurship and "legal plunder," which may be defined as gaming the system. Mercantilism is not to be confused with free economic activity.

In his introduction, Vargas Llosa is blunt, saying, "After half a century of failure, foreign aid can no longer be the preferred tool for lifting the masses of Africa and Latin America out of their economic prostration." I would amend that statement: Foreign aid *should* no longer be the preferred tool. Vargas Llosa marvels that people can accomplish as much as they do: "The fact that, today, millions of people manage to eke out a living in very creative ways under stifling bureaucracies, elitist systems, and despotic governments indicates that entrepreneurship is part of the human spirit and not the exclusive preserve of those countries that have generated astronomical wealth."

And he is adamant that entrepreneurship should not be seen as a merely selfish undertaking. He says, "Many people fail to understand that an entrepreneur who discovers opportunity and transforms resources into wealth provides the most 'social' service possible to the rest of the

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community, even when that is not the original intention." That is elementary, of course, but necessary to repeat, over and over. And, as a respecter of facts, Vargas Llosa has no doubt about what lifts up the Third World: "entrepreneurship, not Western guilt."

The case studies begin with the Añaños family in Peru, which founded Kola Real—soft drinks "priced within reach of the poor." This family started with next to nothing, and now has next to everything: and has employed thousands of people in the process. They have also faced enormous odds, in a business environment that is not exactly, um, Californian. How easy we Americans have it! For one thing, the family had to dodge the Shining Path. For another, they had to cope with the illogic and unfairness of the Peruvian government.

We next have another Peruvian case, this one involving Aquilino Flores, who came to Lima at the age of twelve. He arrived from the hinterland "with one hand covering his front, the other his rear" (which is Peruvian for "without a pot to [you-know-what] in"). This boy started washing cars. And then he sold some T-shirts. And then he found ways to figure out what people wanted, and sold a lot of shirts—becoming Topy Top, a textile company with annual sales in excess of $100 million.

A quick word about the character of the people described in this book: The authors use such words as "gumption," "tenacity," "charisma," "determination," "intuition." Do all people have those qualities? No, at least not in generous doses—but they tend to have some of those qualities, in whatever doses. And they need not become a cola giant, or a textile giant, to improve themselves, and others.

Move next to Kenya, and the case of a supermarket chain, Nakumatt. The authors of this study—June Arunga and Scott Beaulier—state, "In the Western world, we take supermarkets for granted; many of us are, in fact, highly critical of these institutions. But in extremely poor parts of the world, such as Kenya, one would be hard-pressed to find a more important source of human flourishing." Amen.

Kenya is a disaster of an economy, and a disaster of a country, where life expectancy is 48. But the people behind Nakumatt managed to find a way. "This story helps us understand that the entrepreneurial spirit cannot be destroyed, even when governments are providing a weak and perverse institutional environment." That word *perverse* is exactly right. Almost everything in Kenya conspires against the individual, and therefore against the people at large. One local economist made a moving statement. There is nothing wrong with the country, he said—not really, not fundamentally. All that Kenyans need is "a government that will leave them alone to run their businesses and their lives."

From the authors' description, Nakumatt is an African Wal-Mart, selling anything and everything, promoting sales clerks to management, being almost fanatical about customer care. Nakumatt's success, say the authors, "has led to the rise of a new class of farms growing fruit and vegetables in Kenya." The company has been accused of corrupt dealings, and in particular of tax evasion. Whether the charges are true is unclear. In any event, as the authors state, "we should not allow the perfect to become the enemy of the good."

We then go to Nigeria, where the clothing-design industry employs thousands of people—"most of them women with little or no education who have used their entrepreneurial drive to make a living and create wealth where there was previously only misery." And we later read of the "barter clubs" in Argentina, which arose when that country's economy collapsed. These clubs "were not a permanent solution but a private attempt to solve a public problem." The resilience and imagination of people in the face of desperate circumstances are astounding.

In a concluding essay, Joshua C. Hall and Russell S. Sobel write, "Entrepreneurship is the catalyst for economic growth and progress." Note, *the* catalyst, not *a* catalyst. They continue, "A primary determinant of entrepreneurship is economic freedom." I hate to sound like a global-warming hard-liner, but the case is closed—or pretty much so. There is scarcely any need for extended debate. We know what works in defeating poverty: entrepreneurship, the rule of law, transparency in government, low taxation, light regulation, a disinterested judiciary—freedom.

If that is so, why do socialists and kleptocrats do so well at ballot boxes, even when the elections are fair? Well, as Jeane Kirkpatrick once explained—to an exasperated and inquiring Bill Buckley on *Firing Line*—the rhetoric of socialism and collectivism can be stronger than the rhetoric of economic freedom. More alluring. And it is certainly more easily mixed with demagoguery. In addition, people may shy from entrepreneurship, even from opportunity. Thomas Edison once said, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

Lessons from the Poor is not a page-turner, and is unlikely to be a bestseller. The case studies are laid out in painstaking detail, complete with charts and graphs. This is technical, B-school stuff—but infinitely important stuff. The book returns you to the basics of economic life, and even somewhat to life itself. As in all elevated economic texts, there is a dose of spirituality here. I intend to keep this book on my shelf, for factual reference and even, perhaps, for inspiration.

One of the glories of this book is that there is nothing ideological about it. It simply searches the questions, "What works and why?" Material progress is not everything in life, but, as V. S. Naipaul once observed, the poor need it—and they could have it, if only others would get off their throats. **NR**

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■ FILM ■

The End of The Affair

ROSS DOUTHAT

ALMOST nobody remembers now, so completely has it been buried by the cultural weight of the television adaptation, but the original *Sex and the City*—the columns Candace Bushnell penned for the mid-1990s *New York Observer*, and then the book she made of them—was a radically darker piece of work than the gossamer fable of post-feminist life in the Big Apple that HBO spun out of it. Jaded, pessimistic, and almost puritanical, Bushnell's columns painted a grim picture of the mating rituals of the Manhattan haute-bourgeoisie: their fornication rife with predation and humiliation, their relationships poisoned by ambition and commitment-phobia, and their marriages corrupted by materialism and status anxiety.

The television show retained some traces of this faintly Savonarolan spirit, but for the most part it transformed Bushnell's cold-eyed critique into a celebration. The toxic bachelors and sexual humiliations endured, but in the show's first few seasons, especially, they were largely played for French-farce laughs. Anomie gave way to girl power; the drifting, disconnected women who populated the columns became four fast friends who always watched each other's backs; and the substitution of material goods—designer clothes and handbags, jewels and real estate—for personal fulfillment was endorsed instead of scorned.

In a memorable essay for *The New Republic*, the critic Lee Siegel noted the essential fraudulence of the result: "As the series rolled along, you became aware of a damning artifice, an un-mimetic quality startling in a series that was supposed to be a candid look at urban life: None of these women is hurt by sex." But it was a fraudulence—or, more generously, a fantasy—that an entire generation of well-heeled young women eagerly embraced, with the sort of fervor typically reserved for sci-fi obsessives and their favored space operas. (The mid-afternoon showing of *Sex and the City: The Movie* I attended was crammed with glammed-up girls, their high heels and designer dresses the XX-chromosome equivalent of the Darth Vader masks and lightsabers at a *Star Wars* premiere.)

To its credit, the show didn't sustain the fantasy all the way to the end. As its heroines aged, reality gradually impinged on their Manhattan idyll—they had their hearts broken or married Mr. Not-Quite-Right, they battled cancer and infertility, and by the time the show's finale rolled around, all four had acquired traces of real humanity, with the memories and scars to prove it. A show that started out by celebrating its female leads for their independence and empowerment, their ability to date and copulate as casually as any horndog man—a show invested, above all, in the idea that men may come and go, but girlfriends are forever—ended by delivering all four to varying versions of the sort of happy ending that Jane Austen specialized in: to romance, to marriage, and even to motherhood.

Sex's Carrie (Sarah Jessica Parker)

But of course there had to be a film—and whatever measure of moral and artistic redemption the show earned as it arced toward its conclusion is more or less squandered over *Sex and the City: The Movie*'s 148 pointless, endless minutes. The plot finds Carrie (Sarah Jessica Parker) contemplating marriage to Mr. Big (Chris Noth), while Miranda (Cynthia Nixon) and Charlotte (Kristin Davis) cope—the former grimly, the latter blissfully—with being wives and mothers, and the lusty Samantha (Kim Cattrall) endures the rigors of West Coast monogamy with her younger actor-boyfriend, Smith Jerrod (Jason Lewis). There are crises (adultery, cold feet), temptations (from Samantha's polymorphously perverse neighbor, in particular), break-ups (three) and reconciliations (two), tears and hugs and shopping trips. There's a token African-American—Jennifer Hudson, Mammying it up as Carrie's new assistant. There's a trip to Mexico, a montage of wedding dresses, a series of squealing reunions every time Samantha flies in from the Coast. There are moments of truly vicious superficiality: Samantha chastising Miranda for letting herself go post-pregnancy, and then getting payback, from a chorus of disapproving friends, when she dares to gain five pounds or so. And last but not least, there's a room-length shoe closet that Big builds for his Carrie, glowing an angelic white and introduced with a reverence suitable to a religious ritual.

Which, in a sense, is what the movie is: a devotional for conspicuous consumers ("I've died and gone to real-estate heaven," Carrie exhales), with mates and children reduced to mere accessories, flesh-and-blood equivalents of the Right Dress, the Right Purse, and the Right Apartment. "Women come to New York for the two L's: Labels and Love," Carrie opines, absurdly, early in the film, but from the shoe-closet scene on it's clear which L matters most. Save for Nixon, the finest actress in the troupe, who wrings real humanity out of Miranda's marital struggles, the women treat their men primarily as the means to a material end, whether it's comfortable domesticity, high-end shopping, or really great sex.

Cattrall's Samantha gets to make this theme explicit, telling Jerrod that "I love you, but I love me more." But Samantha was always supposed to be a deliberately vampy caricature; it's Carrie, the story's narrator and supposedly its heart, whose fundamental hollowness is really telling. Her six-season dance with Mr. Big gave the show most of its energy, but in the movie, we get to see how that dance concludes, and where their love actually takes them—namely, to a penthouse and a shoe closet, and no farther. It's a marriage of true materialists, a union based purely on hedonism. All that they have, post-courtship, is that he likes to buy things for her and she likes to accept them. Near the end of the movie, Big e-mails her passages from famous love letters, but he'd be better off quoting Nietzsche: He's about to marry the Last Woman. **NR**

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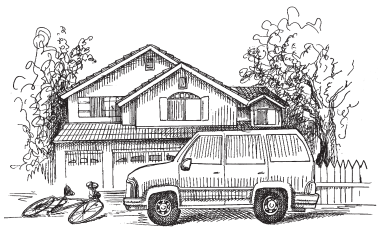
■ THE STRAGGLER ■

The Road to Wisdom



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

How far can I walk? The question's been nagging at me for a couple of years. I'm a sedentary type, and walking is the only form of exercise I have ever really indulged in. In my youth I was a great walker. Welsh and Scottish mountains, the country lanes of rural England, the streets of numerous cities: If all our footprints are recorded in a big book somewhere, mine make a pretty good showing. I never reached the very highest standards—the Royal Marines challenge to cover 100 miles in 24 hours, for example (it has actually been done)—but I was always a rather good walker.

Books about walking were naturally favorites. John Hillaby, whose *Journey through Britain* (he walked from one end to the other) is still in print after 40 years, was a hero of my youth. Later I discovered Slavomir Rawicz's book *The Long Walk*, which describes how the author with six companions escaped from a Soviet labor camp in 1941 and walked across Siberia, Mongolia, Tibet, and the Himalayas, down into British India and freedom. Current critical opinion is that Rawicz made most of it up, but it's still a great story.

So now, having for years done nothing much with my body but inhale and exhale, how far could I walk? I resolved to find out. I had noticed that according to my car's odometer, it is exactly 30 miles from my house out here on Long Island to the middle of the Queensboro Bridge joining that island to Manhattan. Could I walk 30 miles? I made preparations.

John Hillaby walked alone, entertaining himself with what he called "the skull cinema" ("What's playing today?"). Alas, my own skull cinema is empty and cobwebbed, the projectionist having disappeared long ago. I felt the need for a companion across the trackless wastes of Long Island, but of course nobody was volunteering. At last I settled for my Discman and a good long Teaching Company course. A completely new topic would be too much to absorb in one day, so I picked one I was half-familiar with, needing only to fill some gaps: Prof. Jeffrey Kasser's 36-lecture *Philosophy of Science*.

I am proud to record that, yes, I can walk 30 miles, though it took me over 14 hours and the last two miles were a sheer gritted-teeth triumph of the will. Whether I am any wiser, I don't know. In line with Dr. Johnson's remark that men more often need reminding than instructing, most of what I found out on my walk was stuff I'd already known. I relearned, for example, the fact, which I had somehow mislaid, that I do not have the philosophical temperament. No doubt Professor Kasser is a very worthy scholar, but by the time we got to Goodman's critique of Hume's critique of induction, he was boring me.

I relearned some basic life lessons too: for example, that despair is the parent of achievement.

Despair arrived shortly after the ten-mile mark. I was passing the C. W. Post Campus of Long Island University, which has some lovely lawns fronting the highway. Well, I thought, I've done ten miles, it wouldn't hurt to just rest up and air my feet for a few minutes. I climbed up on one of the grassy slopes to the shade of a tree, sat down, took off boots and socks, wiggled my toes, and treated myself to an energy bar and some bottled water.

Folly! The first great rule of distance walking is *don't stop.* If you stop, you will seize up. The experienced walker rests by slowing his pace. I knew all this from the mountain hikes of my youth, but the grass and the shade were too tempting and youth too far behind me. I lay down on the grass and listened to Professor Kasser discourse on the Method of Concomitant Variations. He had far too much to say about it. I began to doze . . . then caught myself. This would not do! The mission, the mission! I slapped some petroleum jelly on my blistered feet, put socks and boots back on, and stood up.

Now that first great rule kicked in. My legs would not move! Ankles, knees, hips had all quit on me. By swinging my legs without flexing, and slapping my feet flat on the ground, I lurched down the slope to the roadway. Swing-lurch, swing-lurch. It was no use. I couldn't continue! Ten miles was my limit, my pathetic limit. I had to give up.

But . . . how, exactly? C. W. Post is in the Empty Quarter of Nassau County. Nobody lives there. There is no public transportation. I own no cellphone. The nearest railroad station is two miles away. I had no choice but to walk *somewhere*, however much it hurt. Desperately I lurched on down the road, recalling Samuel Beckett: *I can't go on, I'll go on*. After a couple of hundred yards of swing-lurch, my joints and muscles began to un-seize. By the time I reached Greenvale, a mile farther on, despair was banished. I was walking more or less normally, and actually paying attention to Thomas Kuhn's claims about the incommensurability of paradigms. Perhaps the real life lesson here is that necessity is the parent of resolution.

By the 15-mile mark I was positively striding. Around 24 miles a general systemic fatigue developed, but I made it to Manhattan, hailed a cab to Penn Station, and rode the train home.

The next day was, of course, excruciating. Sedentary persons should not impose sudden strenuous tests on themselves. Mrs. Straggler sighed resignedly: "You're *crazy.* Make yourself *lame.*" The kids mocked in their merciless way, calling me Edgar after the stiff-limbed zombie character in *Men in Black*. The neighbors no doubt chuckled to each other for the umpteenth time about mad dogs and Englishmen.

I had indeed gotten badly burned by the midday sun, and lost a toenail, and gained some spectacular blisters. My heart was at peace, though. I had set myself a test and passed it. I conquered despair and got acquainted with Supervenience Physicalism. We overcome, we learn, and we make it to the end of the road somehow. **NR**

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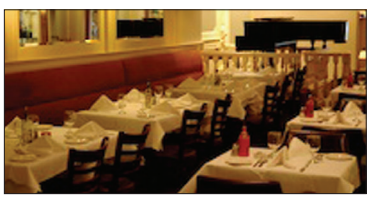

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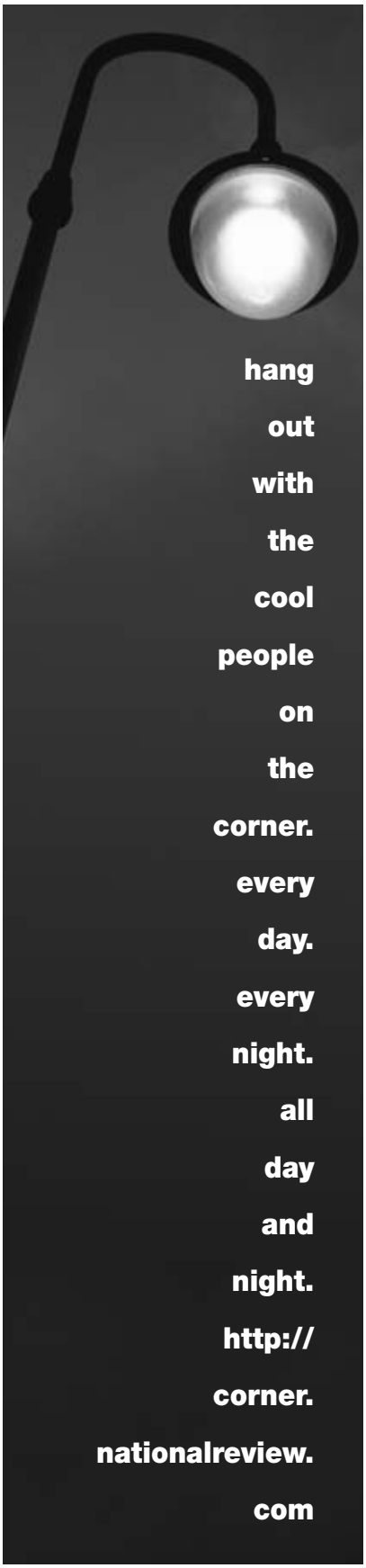

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KATHLEEN PARKER

A Hill Too Far

THE day after Hillary Clinton's concession-ish speech, endorsing Barack Obama but not quite quitting, a *Washington Post* headline queried: "After a Heartbreaker, Can Feminism Rally?"

Must we?

Decades into the gender wars, can't Feminism just toss on a summer frock, jump into her roadster, and rumble off to the beach with a cheap novel and a bottle of expensive wine?

Heartbreak comes early and often to the well-lived life, but Hillary's failed presidential bid does not bestir my inner victim. Perhaps it is a symptom of lapsed membership in the sisterhood, but I can't see my way to worrying what this means to Womankind.

Yet the doyennes of doom—those women we've all seen ululating lamentations over their tattered Hillary signs—tell us we blew it. We had our chance to make a woman the lead dog and we failed to rally. Among the post-mortem conclusions are that misogyny—especially from white male pundits—undercut Hillary, but that women leaders and journalists share the blame.

One angry female e-mailer pointed to Tim Russert, Keith Olbermann, and Chris Matthews as leaders of the bad-boy pack; but even worse, she said, were women journalists, who "participated, giving the good old boys permission to be unfair, inaccurate and inappropriate. . . . It was rare the woman journalist who called anything out of line. . . . Not one white male has ever been treated as poorly by the media as HRC."

Not one? Not even George W. Bush? Not Bill Clinton?

"Hillary's failure is our [women's] failure," she continued. "The sisterhood, as you call it, missed its opportunity to make history. The African-American community didn't."

I hate missing a date with history as much as anyone, but might there be some other explanation than that women declined to support another woman on the basis of their shared sex? Isn't it also possible that Hillary wasn't the right candidate for some women (and men) because she was *first* a Clinton and only secondarily a woman?

Hillary's Clintonism, not easily ignored thanks to her husband's histrionics on the trail, didn't help her. Neither did her own performances, which memorably included recalling her manly courage under imagined Bosnian sniper fire, as well as frequent shape-shifting—from channeling a black minister in Selma to playing the bumptious barfly in Indiana. In the end, her memory and her identity seemed too malleable to be trustworthy.

'Grace Kelly, dynamite'

It is true, as women often complained, that the media sometimes focused on personal aspects of Hillary The Woman—her appearance, her voice—rather than Her Rodham-ness The Candidate. A college student writing in the same issue of the *Post* that featured the above headline expressed her disappointment upon hearing Chris Matthews open his commentary on Clinton's debate performance with, "First of all, her pearls, Grace Kelly, dynamite."

Misogyny? Or an off-handed remark intended as a compliment? The idea that any comment about a woman's appearance is sexist is as dated as June Cleaver, especially when everything a candidate does, including wardrobe selection, is a campaign decision designed to sway voters. You can be sure those pearls were not an afterthought. No one has better advance people than Hillary: At each debate, her attire was perfectly suited to the backdrop. She once spoke—at a luncheon I happened to be attending—wearing a suit, lipstick, and nail polish that perfectly matched the pink tablecloths.

You can pretend that you want to be just one of the boys, but Hillary herself urged women to help her bust through the ultimate glass ceiling. If you're not the first viable woman running for president, after all, you're just another male contender. Try standing out in that crowd without a pink suit and a history of victimhood.

Appearance and style—though obviously not of central importance—are part of the package. How one chooses to present oneself is part of a candidate's persona—the same persona she will present to other nations, to foreign leaders, and, not least, to our living rooms more often than most people are welcome to. If Americans are reminded of a car alarm each time the president speaks, we've got a problem that can be solved only with the "Mute" button.

That kind of negative isn't insignificant. Was it mentioned only because Hillary is a woman? Or would a man whose voice was similarly jarring get equal treatment? The cartoon-voiced Ross Perot might have an opinion about that.

Men such as Matthews, meanwhile, probably helped Hillary more than they hurt her. Women reported feeling sympathy and becoming Clintonites because they perceived that men were treating her unfairly. But Hillary was and ever will be more than just-a-woman. She is a complex character with a long political history, much of which many Americans remember without fondness.

Some have prophesied that Hillary's defeat means the death of old feminism (peace be upon her). What it really means is that many women are as sensible as many men, enough of whom apparently were in no mood to let Hill and Bill resume their residency in the White House.

It wasn't the woman, stupid. It was the Clinton. **NR**

Kathleen Parker is a syndicated columnist with the Washington Post Writers Group and author of *Save the Males*.

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